FEELING SCHOOLS, AFFECTIVE NATION: UNRAVELLING THE EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

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ANG CONG PING CLARA
29 JULY 2015

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation engages with the burgeoning geographical literature on the emotions to examine the ways in which educational spaces in Singapore are (re)made as schools become sites to incorporate emotional education into the curriculum. By considering the Ministry of Education's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), as well as Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curricula in Singaporean schools, I explore how the emotions are appropriated as a pedagogical tool for shaping subjectivities under the guise of 'values education'. However, the dissertation also highlights how the emotions can be mobilised by teachers and students as a tactic to maneuver established rules. The research draws on ethnographic research conducted in a Singaporean secondary school where I utilised interviews, classroom observations, and a collaborative photo-reflection project using social media. I suggest three ways in which the emotions can unsettle dominant portrayals of educational spaces. First, I argue that teachers engage in emotional labour to enact care towards their students, and in doing so, undermine dominant social values delivered through the curriculum. Second, I highlight how students perform certain types of emotions aimed at manipulating figures of authority in their schools. Third, I draw attention to forms of emotional 'slippages' that are enacted unintentionally by teachers and students, but which subvert the Singaporean state's tactics of governing through the SEL and CCE. Overall, by bringing together debates from emotional geographies, geographies of education, and young people's geographies, this thesis suggests that inasmuch as it is important to study the ways in which the emotions serve as calculated tools for governing, we also need to enquire about the potential for emotions to (re)shape politics, subjectivities, and space in unexpected and spontaneous ways.

Keywords: emotions; education; young people; schools; governmentality; performativity; values education

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

SEL- Social and Emotional Learning

MOE- Ministry of Education

CCE- Citizenship and Character Education

TSLN- Thinking School Learning Nation

VIA- Values-in-Action

VE- Values Education

1. Introduction

1.1 Thinking Through the Multiplicity of Spaces in Education

In recent years, geographers have taken up the task of thinking through the geographies of education in relation to globalisation. Instead of just accounting for spatial variations surrounding education provision and consumption, geographers have attempted to interrogate more critically how education can provide us with lenses to look at the larger political and economic processes they are embedded within. Claudia Thiem calls this an "outward-looking" (2009:156) geography of education that is important in informing "discussions of the geographies of neoliberalisation, globalization, and knowledge economy formation" (Thiem, 2009:154).

Whilst acknowledging the importance of looking at education through the lens of large-scale political-economic processes, scholars have also argued that it is important to look at the relations between education and the social lives of individuals concurrently—what Holloway et.al. call an "inward and outward-looking" (2010:584) geographies of education. As Peck has observed, the diffusion of neo-liberalism is necessarily a social process, and its diffusion is not simply carried out by "faceless, structural forces, but also by… structurally positioned agents" (2004:399). This highlights the importance of looking at the "everyday public sector" (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012:641), as well as the relationships between policy actors and subjects. Indeed, the institutionalisation of education does not only occur at the global and national scales, it is also spatialised in the microgeographies of schools and even individual bodies, we need to look at education as a realm co-produced by *intersecting scales*. Several geographers also argue that besides adopting a scalar perspective, there is a need to re-conceptualise and interrogate the *multifarious spaces* which

education makes (Holloway and Jons, 2012; Collins and Coleman, 2008; Kraftl, 2013). In particular, scholars have proposed that to elicit the complexity of the realm of education, we need to look at a myriad of learning sites and situate education in specific contexts, so as to understand the different modes of governance which produce educational spaces, as well as the diverse impacts of education policies.

Although the geographies of education is now a burgeoning subfield which is concerned with "the importance of spatiality in the production, consumption and implications of formal education systems" (Holloway and Jons, 2012:482), within this emerging literature scholars are still mainly concerned with either the political-economic side of education, or purely the 'social' side of education by *only* looking at the microgeographies of classrooms or schools. Far too little attention has been paid to explore the *interrelationships* between these two aspects of education. Additionally, most debates are also informed by empirical studies situated in Anglo-American contexts, which necessarily limits our theorisations of education. According to Massey (2005), globalisation is very much about power geometries, as well as a product of *interrelations*. Thus when we talk about educational spaces we need to look at how educational spaces and subjectivities are produced in a myriad of ways. In Massey's words, we need to understand educational spaces as being in "open, on-going production" (2005:55). This view of educational spaces is important because it "makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentiality of voices".

This thesis therefore asks pertinent questions about how we can conceptualise education in a dynamic manner which pays attention to the different spatialities, which in turn produce, and are produced by different conditions of power in specific contexts. In the next section, I will look at how the incorporation of emotional learning in

Singapore's educational agenda in recent years provides us with a fresh entry point to interrogate the relationships between education, political-economic conditions, as well as young people's subjectivities.

1.2 Context: Introducing Emotional Education in Singapore

Singapore came up top in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is an assessment organised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In a press release, the Ministry of Education (MOE) states that the PISA findings show that Singaporean students are "innovative, are able to handle uncertainty, and dare to experiment with alternative solutions" (MOE, 2014). The press release also highlights that Singaporean students are well-equipped with problem-solving and creative skills, and such competencies will stand the students "in good stead in a globalised, information-rich economy" so as to help Singapore create a brighter future. Although the PISA results were widely published in both local and foreign press, it is hardly surprising that the nation-state has performed well in the assessment. This is because Singapore's education policies have always been aggressive in focusing on training students to be ready for the knowledge sector. For instance, the 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' (TSLN) initiative was introduced in 1997, with special emphasis on promoting critical and creative thinking (Gopinathan, 2007).

However, although education in Singapore is seemingly positioned as a rational enterprise focusing on developing logical and cognitive skills, there seems to be an increasing emphasis on emotional skills in schools during the recent years. This introduction of emotions in the syllabus is especially prominent in citizenship education. According to Elizabeth Gagen, education and school function to create a form of

"citizenly consciousness" (2013:2) by disciplining bodies and reproducing strategic subjectivities that serve the state. In Singapore, this is done through the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) (previously named Civics and Moral Education), a compulsory programme targeted for Primary and Secondary Schools, where students learn about values and relationship, "starting with self and extending to the family, school, community, nation and the world" (MOE, 2012).

What is particularly striking about CCE is the way in which it departs from the overtly cognitive-driven skills that are being emphasised under the TSLN. Rather, the CCE programme places strong emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which MOE defines as "an umbrella term that refers to students' acquisition of skills to recognise and manage emotions, develop care and concern for others" (MOE, 2014). The Importance of SEL is highlighted in schools because it is argued that social and emotional competencies can "help a person to be a good citizen, who contributes positively to civic life" (MOE, 2014). It is also noteworthy that the CCE curriculum not only seeks to impart knowledge surrounding social values and skills to students, but also to create a form of awareness between the self and the spheres of "family, school, community, nation and the world" (MOE, 2012). The shift from an education system which overtly favours cognitive development, to a system which embraces emotional learning is not only compelling, but also raises important questions: what is the role of emotion in education policy, and what are the implications?

The case-study of Singapore is thus a potentially fruitful topic to contribute to the current debates in the Geographies of Education. As the example of SEL in Singapore has shown, the introduction of emotions into the curriculum has its roots in the global market. At the same time, such policies are directly implemented on the individual

psyches and bodies of the students. As the syllabus of SEL demonstrates, for the Singapore government, not only is emotion now considered a skill to master, the notion of *social learning* is also emphasised alongside it. This shows that although it is important to contextualise and situate the workings of contemporary education within the global and neo-liberal discourses, it is equally important to look at the ways in which social identities and relations are being implicated through such organisations of power. In order to understand why such policies are implemented and how political subjectivities within this political condition are constructed, we will therefore have to look at how emotion has become a new mode of power for the state to utilise in educational spaces. At the same time, it is also pertinent to look at the *impacts* of this new governmental regime.

The examination of emotional governance is pertinent because schools constitute a huge part of young people's lifeworld in Singapore. Under the Singapore education system, Singaporeans are required to attend school for a minimum of at least six years. Within the mainstream schools where compulsory education is mandated for all citizens, children and young people spend most of their waking hours attending classes, as well as co-curricular activities. The policies and practices of education are undoubtedly affecting childhood in a variety of manners. Yet, the socio-spatial relations of schooling in Singapore have been very much overlooked. Previous studies on the educational landscape of Singapore have often placed emphasis on the effectiveness of neoliberal and developmental policies by means of discourse analysis, through the appraisal of the official curriculum (Koh, 2005; Tan and Chin, 2004; Chew, 1988; Gopinathan, 1980). However, what is not explored is what is taught and experienced in the "hidden curriculum", which are the "values and knowledge that transpire in the

everyday social and cultural practices of schooling" (Giroux and Purpel, 1983, in Liew, 2014:7).

1.3 Thesis Objectives and Directions

In Massey's book, she highlights that space is a product of interrelations and embedded practices, constructed relationally alongside with social identities, and it is thus the job of geographers to raise political questions relating "the politics of those geographies and our relationship to and responsibility for them" (2005:10). In researching the governing of emotions in educational institutions in Singapore, there is a need to focus on the everyday relations, negotiations, and contestations in school. Doing this will offer us potential to advance not only the ways in which education is embedded in the global economy, but also offer us the possibility to explore new forms of politics in with young people are enmeshed. In response to the shortcomings in the current scholarships, as well as empirical gaps, this thesis raises the following questions:

(a) *Why and how are emotions used as tools for governance in Singapore*; and how can a spatial/scalar perspective aid us in looking at emotional governmentality in Singapore?

(b) *What are the consequences of such emotional governance?* How do students and teachers consume, produce, and negotiate with the emotional practices in school?

(c) *What are some of the new possibilities of theorising emotions and geographies of education* which arises from the case-study of Singapore*?*

This thesis discusses the role of emotionality in shaping the subjectivities of young people in Singapore. As a response to Holloway et.al.'s (2010) call for both an 'inward'

and ‘outward’- looking geography of education, this thesis will elicit emotions as a lens to examine the ways in which education spaces are being (re)made through a series of open and on-going productions. Following the theorisation of emotions as cultural and political practices, I conceptualise education as an affective site shaped by global processes and nationalistic goals, but at the same time imbued with the tensions and struggles of youths and education workers as they negotiate with hegemonic ideals and collective social norms taught in the school syllabus.

This thesis will show that in the developmental state of Singapore, where educational institutions serve as spaces for citizenship and capitalistic subject formation, emotions are utilised as a pedagogical tool for the formation of the ideal citizen-worker. Through the emphasis on social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools, emotions are deployed as a tool to discipline students to display socially acceptable behaviours and values. This is especially evident in the new Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curriculum which is partially guided by the SEL framework. I argue that in the context of Singapore, such institutionalisation of emotions is achieved through the notion of ‘values education’, where students are taught the ‘correct’ ways of being so that they can function as model citizens in the society. Here, emotions are co-opted to create various forms of habitus, where normative social values are incorporated into the embodied rituals of teachers and students in school by establishing emotional norms that are in-line with the dominant ‘values’ taught. I highlight that the production of emotions is not only targeted on the bodies of the students and resides within them. Rather, the entire economy of emotions is produced through various discourses, and sustained by a network of technologies.

Finally, I argue that it is key to look beyond the notions of emotional capital and emotional labour in order to have a more nuanced theorization of emotions and the emotional landscapes of education. In looking only at the production and circulation of emotions in terms of emotional governmentality, we assume that all emotions serve to fulfil larger-scale political agendas. By treating emotions as merely tools for the state to serve its nationalist and developmental needs, we are assuming that young people are passively involved in this emotional economy, and are merely objects waiting to be affected. This not only limits our conception of what consists of 'the political', but also ignores the agencies of the subjects involved in the production, consumption and circulation of emotions, and forsakes the agencies of young people by treating them as "adults-in-waiting" (Skelton, 2007:177). Using findings from my ethnography, I will show how students and teachers do not only follow existing structured dispositions, and get passively 'absorbed' into the institutionalised emotional norms. I argue that far from being systematic, the nature of emotions as something invisible and difficult to grasp means that students and teachers can be 'playful' with emotions, and are able to mobilise emotions as a form of tactic to maneuver within established rules and power. I contend that there is a need to look at the specific *encounters and performances* between individual bodies to construct a more productive conceptual tool for looking at the relations between space, structures, and feelings.

1.4 Thesis Organisation

This chapter has sketched out the thesis' research impetus, and presented an overview of the thesis' objectives. In the next chapter, I will draw out relevant literature which informs my research, before charting out my conceptual framework for an emotional geographies of education. Chapter 3 provides a contextual framing to the

rationale involved in mobilising emotion as a governing tool in Singapore's educational landscape, and chapter 4 presents a discussion of my methodological scaffolding. In my empirical chapters, I will look at how the interrelations between spatial, social, and economic-political processes can help us interrogate the power geometries within the realm of education. In Chapter 5, I will examine how emotion is elicited by the government to cultivate knowledge workers and docile citizens. In Chapter 6, I will look at the ways in which students and teachers negotiate the emotional economy by eliciting emotions as a form of tactics. Finally, I will lay out the empirical and theoretical contributions to the existing scholarships on the emotional geographies of education in Chapter 7, before discussing some of the possible directions for further research.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

Discussions surrounding education (and especially works devoted to exploring the intersections between emotional geographies and geographies of education) can be considered a relatively nascent affair within the discipline of Geography. In fact, in a special issue of Emotion, Space, and Society, editors Kenway and Youdell declare that to their knowledge, "no emotional geographies of education exist" (2011:131). However, since the publication of Kenway and Youdell's editorial, a burgeoning body of work surrounding emotions and education has been devoted to opening up vibrant conversations in the discipline. This chapter evaluates selected bodies of literature in order to draw out theoretical intersections that will orientate a critical analysis of emotional geographies of education in Singapore. In the following sections, I review three interrelated bodies of literatures. **Section 2.2** examines how we need to politicise the study of modern education in order to have a critical understanding of the workings of education. I do so by reviewing studies done by scholars that have theorised (modern) education and its purposes. Drawing on the works of social theorists, I argue that education is an ideological tool, and a form of governmentality that seeks to discipline subjects and craft them into 'useful bodies' for the prevailing socio-political-economic system, which education is situated within. Next, the section explores the importance of foregrounding geographical perspectives in analysing educational landscapes. I look at how geographers, in focusing on the spaces and spatialities which constitute education, have provided important insights on the importance of empirically situating studies of education. I posit that an inquiry into spaces and scales

is paramount to illuminating the processes of identity formation and power-relations in Singapore's education landscape.

Section 2.3 reviews key literatures on young people and children's geographies, paying particular attention to the debates on how young people are implicated in the process of subject-making in the different spaces of education, particularly within schools. Following, I highlight the ways in which the literature on childhood and youth encourages us to think about young people's lived experiences in the education landscape, which allow us to interrogate ethical and political issues in terms of how young people's experiences of schooling are constitutive of the actions and decisions of different stakeholders (teachers, parents, and policy-makers). I question the claims put forth by some studies which claim that young people *should* and *can* have the capacity to exert their agencies and participate or intervene in the educational processes that shape their lives. I will also look at how studying the geographies of children's lives can help us to open up discussions regarding the practices of caring in Singapore's education landscape.

Both sets of literatures highlight the economic, political, and social aspects of education, as well as how education takes place in a myriad of spaces and scales. This points towards the need for a framework that takes into account the multi-dimensional nature of education. Drawing attention to the gaps in the two bodies of literature, I will shed light on the theoretical foundations of emotional geographies of education in **section 2.4**, and how this corpus of work can serve as a scaffold to bridge the gaps in geographies of education and children's geographies. Specifically, I discuss the role of emotion as an optic to uncover the dynamic workings of education. I explain how the theorisation of emotions as social and calculated can help us look at

the ways in which hegemonic ideals are related to the social lives of young people and other stakeholders in the education landscape. These studies help us look at how neoliberal policies and national politics make use of emotions to transform how young people relate to schooling.

Lastly, in **section 2.5**, I will discuss the conceptual framework of my research and how it speaks to the rest of my empirical analysis. Following Massey's call for geographical studies which look at globalisation as a product of power geometries and a series of interrelations, I argue for a form of emotional geographies of education which pays attention to the relations between global and national processes as well as bodily politics. This requires an emotional geographies of education that is sensitive to *intersecting scales*. Here, I introduce the three conceptual themes that frame my research: *emotions and governmentality, performativity and emotions, as well as emotions as tactics*.

2.2 Theorising Education and Education Spaces

In the words of Kraftl, "contemporary research on education is enormously broad, rich and intense, and spans several academic disciplines" (2013:23). Hence, there is a need to ground my research on specific themes surrounding the studies of education. This section begins by looking at how scholars move beyond the assumption that education is a sine-qua-non of everyday (modern) life. Instead, education needs to be treated as a discourse, which serves certain political imperatives. Following, I look at the different strands of work by geographers of education, and outline the importance of looking at education as a heterogeneous system affected by different spatial processes; and consisting of multifarious education spaces. I argue that taken together, the different strands of theoretical and empirical writings highlights the

importance of situating educational studies within specific socio-political-economic contexts. This entails studying not only education policies, and the broader political/economic processes constitutive of the educational landscapes, but also exploring the socialities within the specific spaces of education.

2.2.1 Politicising the Study of Modern Education

In order to engage with the study of education critically, we have to first trace the ways in which modern education came to be framed as such. The works of sociologists and historians of education are useful in helping us to position the domain of education contextually. In particular, the work of Richard Aldrich (2010) is useful in tracing the historicity of modern education. In his paper, he draws out three main overlapping histories of education: *education for salvation:* where education in the medieval and early modern period was controlled by the Church; *education for the state:* where national education and military strategies were taught to the masses to establish a sense of nationalism*; and education for progress:* where scientific logic was taught in schools during the Enlightenment period for the sake of material and moral progress. In tracing the genealogy of (Western) education, Aldrich highlights how education serves as an institution to instil the relevant knowledge to the masses based on the different needs of the society.

Similarly, in an oft-cited work by Henry Giroux, he highlights how radical educators argue that the main functions of education "are the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of labour" (1983:257-258). Giroux conceptualises educational institutions as *reproductive spaces* where legitimate forms of knowledge and values are disseminated to the masses. Thus, for scholars such as Aldrich and Giroux, the

realm of education is inherently political and ideological. Besides looking at education as a knowledge-producing mechanism, we should also look at the *discourses* of education- that is, looking at what kinds of knowledge are being produced, how they are produced, and for what ends. Indeed, as the studies show, educational institutions are *political sites* where dominant forms of knowledge and values are disseminated to the masses. Thus, the realm of education can only be understood through an analysis of the historical and social contexts in which they are embedded.

In the recent decade, a number of studies that tackle the notion of neoliberal restructuring of education have emerged. The neoliberal regime catalysed a major change in the education landscape, beckoning new analytical approaches to studying the realm of education. Various scholars are committed to conceptualising the relations between globalisation and education. For instance, scholars have looked at how global capitalism placed education at the forefront of national competitiveness (McGregor, 2009; Davis and Bansel, 2007; Collins, 2014). Davis and Bansel argue that the process of neoliberalism, in transforming the administrative state into a state that "gives power to global corporations" (2007:248), has a huge role to play in transforming the education landscape.

The neoliberal restructuring of education has catapulted some academics to study new relationships between *governmentality* and education in the neoliberal climate. Social theorist Nikolas Rose (following Focault) defines governmentality as a type of political power played out by "a complex set of strategies, utilising and encouraging the new positive knowledges of economy, sociality and the moral order, and harnessing already existing micro-fields of power" (1999:18). Drawing on this foucauldian theorisation of knowledge/power, many scholars have utilised the concept of

governmentality to argue that the process of subject-making in the new political-economic climate is even more complex than what it was (Christie and Sidhu, 2006; Devine and Luttrell, 2013; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Mitchell, 2006). As demonstrated earlier, education is primarily a tool to instill various forms of knowledge to the population so that they can work *for* the state. However, in the neoliberal era, education is producing subjects who are reconfigured to become "economic entrepreneurs" (Davis and Bansel, 2007:248) and "individualized, responsibilised subjects", able to take charge of their own lives. This relates to Foucault's concept oft-cited concept of biopolitics. According to Foucault's genealogical study of the relations between individuals, state and power, biopolitics is broadly defined as the "art and styles of governing…focused on the management of …things as well as people, by the state and private agents" (Rutherford and Rutherford, 2013:413). In this reading, sovereign power has shifted from the "taming" of people through discipline to a more dispersed power regime in the surveillance society where individuals are self-regulating. Neoliberal education can be seen as a distinctive form of bio-power. Instead of producing outwardly docile and disciplined beings, the goal of neoliberal education is to shape students into *seemingl*y 'free' subjects capable of making their own decisions. Some scholars argue that since education is something that is almost unanimous (and seen as essential) in the global era, it is extremely important to look at the process of subjectification because it affects young people's everyday lives, as well as well-being. Devine and Lutterll posits that one of the most important implications of education today is the way in which the value of education is often analysed through an "economically instrumentalist lens" (2013:241). This not only narrows and limits children's experience of learning, but also their experience of childhood. In a like

manner, McGregor's research reveals that education and learning has become increasingly commodified in the age of neoliberalism. She cites the example of Australia, where public schools are "forced to compete for students in an educational marketplace increasingly shaped by managerial discourses" (2009:346). Thus, in the neoliberal environment, education is increasingly a more unequal terrain whereby new forms of exclusions are taking place. There is therefore a need to study the impacts of such inequalities.

This body of work highlights the need to look at the impacts of new and emerging governance regimes in education outside the Anglo-American education system. This theme has been picked up by many political and educational theorists interested in studying the nexus of politics, economics, and education in Asia (Lee, 1998; Gopinathan, 2007; Abe, 2006; McGregor, 2009). In particular, scholars are interested in looking at how East Asian states, being concerned with both nation-building and economic growth, utilise education as a developmental strategy. They are also invested in exploring the differences in policies and impacts across different states. In my dissertation, I will employ the concepts of governmentality and neoliberalism to uncover the ways in which education in Singapore is connected and influenced by processes of globalisation and nation-building. I will return to this theme, and engage with the literature surrounding governmentality and education in East-Asia and Singapore, in Chapter 3.

2.2.2 Foregrounding Geographies of Education

In tracing the genealogy of education, as well as contextualizing it in the global context, we can see that education is a dynamic system that evolves over time. However, it is evident that economic globalisation and neoliberal policies are not

merely results of historical evolution. Instead, the processes present themselves differently in diverse geographical settings, bringing with them distinctive transformations to the lives of students. Evidently, the discipline of geography has much to contribute in relation to research surrounding education, notwithstanding the infancy of the emerging sub-discipline (Taylor, 2009; Kraftl, 2013; Holloway and Jons, 2012). Nonetheless, works from a few authors have already generated lively discussions surrounding the ways in which we should approach the geographies of education.

(a) Spaces of Education

As mentioned earlier, education is not monolithic, and is produced by overlapping processes across time and space. Hence, the discipline is in a strategic position to look at how different spaces are transformed as a result of these processes. A significant theme that has emerged from the growing interest in education in Geography is the study of what constitutes 'educational spaces'. In a Boundary Crossing paper published in *Transactions*, Holloway and Jons argue that the geographies of education and learning should "consider the importance of spatiality in the production, consumption and implications of formal education systems… and of informal learning environments" (2012:482). Similarly, Collins and Coleman (2008) argue for a social geographies of education which is concerned with studying a myriad of spaces, and the linkages between them. They contend that we should look not only within institutions such as schools, but also the broader communities linked to them, such as neighbourhoods and households and even the nation-state. However, the engagement with educational spaces in the discipline also gave rise to critical works which flag out how one should be careful of "fetishi(sing) space" (Robertson, in Taylor, 2009:652), or

assuming that education spaces are neatly categorised and sealed into air-tight spaces. In his book Kraftl (2013) moves beyond conventional theorisations of education, by looking at what he calls the geographies of alternative/autonomous education. By looking at a myriad of learning sites (such as farms, homeschooling, and Montessori schools) beyond mainstream, institutionalised schools, Kraftl's work highlights that it is equally important for geographers to look at learning *processes* rather than just learning spaces. By doing so, Kraftl dismantles the conventional understandings of education (one that is often underpinned by the Anglo-American, state-controlled imaginings of education), and problematises the notion of 'good education'.

(b) Spatialities of Education

Besides merely looking at the spaces of education, the notion of spatialities of education has been at the forefront of geographical debates. In this body of literature, the interplay between *social and spatial processes* is central for scholars interested in looking at education spaces and the modes of governance which produces them. A significant contribution to the field is by Claudia Thiem (2009), who advocates a "strategically decentered and outward-looking geography of education" (2009:155). Thiem argues that thinking *through education*, and the ways in which education is an engine that drives prominent changes in the neoliberal economy (instead of the other way round) is a productive way to engage with the geographies of education. For Thiem, education is useful as a tool for reconstructing accounts of contemporary institutional transformations and spatial restructuring. However, while the work of Thiem is helpful in positioning education in the intermediary of neoliberalism and spatial processes, her conceptualisation fails to take into consideration the specific

subject positions within the knowledge spaces that the education landscape is producing. This debate is taken up by Holloway et.al (2010), whose work aims to further Thiem's vision for a 'decentered' geography of education. The authors argue that since education plays an important role in the reproduction of cultural, economic, and social capital, attention also needs to be paid to analyse how *social identities* are (re)produced by education. They posit that to do this, researchers need to foreground children and young people in geographical research, so as to "focus on the voices and subjectivities of young people" (2010:594).

Engaging with both Thiem and Holloway et.al's debates, Kraftl's book on the geographies of education looks at both the "'internal' processes taking place within schools, and 'external' dis/connections outside the school walls" (2013:51). For Kraftl, education is not only a useful site for us to study the larger political-economic structures in which it affects, or merely how social identities are shaped. Rather, for him, "learning spaces operate across a series of registers and concerns- financial, political, habitual, affective, material and much more" (2013:54). What is particularly useful in Kraftl's work is his utilisation of the concept of *spatialities* to interrogate the diverse aspects of alternative education. Citing Pile and Keith, Kraftl defines spatiality as "the ways in which the social and spatial are inextricably realized in one another… (conjuring) up the circumstances in which society and space are simultaneously realised by thinking, feeling, doing individuals and […] the many different conditions in which such realisations are experienced" (2013:1).

However, despite the debates, there seems to persist two distinct fields studying the 'meta' processes affecting education (e.g. globalization and neoliberalism), vis-à-vis studies focusing on the social lives of individuals or groups without commenting

much on the aforementioned processes. With the exceptions of Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson's paper on the case study of educational restructuring in England (2012), and Cheng's (2015, forthcoming) book chapter on the cultural politics of education in Singapore. Both works are empirically informed, in which the authors engaged with various actors within the education landscapes so as to look at the different ways in which subjectivities are crafted in the capitalist regime. For instance, Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson uncovered how the neoliberal education sector is underpinned by the reproduction of discourses which are classed, (de)gendered, and heterosexed, while Cheng explores how Singaporean students enrolled in a private higher-education institution are responding to the demands of the education system due to neoliberal restructuring. My research is a response to Holloway et.al's (2010) and Kraftl's (2013) call for a more productive framework for the geographies of education. I return to the notion of space and spatialities in education in the concluding section of this chapter.

2.3 Productive lenses from Children's and Young People's Geographies

In this section, I will explore how an engagement with children's geographies can provide us with productive tools to look at some of the concerns in education geographies. So far, I have looked at how education is a site of governmentality where various subjectivities are crafted. I have also demonstrated that the study of geographies of education needs to expand its scope to encompass multiple sites which make up these nexus of 'governable' spaces. I argue that in order to do that, we need to look at the interrelationships of spatial scales, from the global neoliberal market to individual bodies. In this section I look at how the works of children's geographers can provide us with tools to look at such interrelationships. Globally, young people are spending more time in educational institutions such as schools, especially in the case

of developed or industrializing societies (Smith and Ansell, 2009). The works of children's geographers have much to contribute in terms of looking at the "production of identities … and the formation of subjectivities" (Lewis, 2009:389) in education.

2.3.1 Young People in the Global World

According to Holloway and Valentine (2000), the proliferation of academic work which came to be recognised as *the new social studies of childhood* have contributed to paradigmatic shifts in children's geographies in two ways: first, in pushing forward the notion that childhoods are myriad, constructed and contested, second, in highlighting the abilities and competencies of children, and recognising that children are "beings in their own right rather than as pre-adult becomings" (Holloway and Valentine, 2000:5). One of the ways in which children's geographers engage with these new tropes of research is by paying attention to the different life experiences of young people across different spaces, and the role of young people in the process of globalisation. Indeed, if one's experiences of childhood is contingent on the different contexts in which one is embedded, then it is pertinent to study how children are affected by the rapid, and sometimes chaotic making, re-making, and un-making of spaces in the era of globalisation, due to rapid capital and cultural flows.

One of the key proponents of studying the geographies of children and globalisation is Stuart Aitken. He argues that despite their "influence globally as a market niche and their importance as a focus of care and responsibility" (2007:4), young people's voices are still relatively muted in academic studies on globalisation. In his co-authored book with Lund and Kjørholt, the authors also highlight that by emplacing young people at the heart of studying global processes, we can glean new ways of interrogating the geographies of economic development. More importantly, we

can also gain more insights on how young people are implicated within some of the "stark and oppressive outcomes of neo-liberal agendas and global corporate capitalism" (2013:4). In relation to Aitken et.al's work, Cindi Katz's pivotal work *Growing Up Global* provides good theoretical and empirical focus on globalisation and the politics of childhood. In her book, Katz examines "the processes of development and global change through the perspective of children's lives" (2004:iX). By doing in-depth, longitudinal ethnographic study with a group of Sudanese Children, Katz is able to counter the processes of 'development' through the lens of children and their everyday lives.

The works of Katz and Aitken speak to some of the empirical and theoretical gaps in education geographies, where, despite acknowledging the relationships between education and the processes of globalisation, young people are still left out in the studies. This is especially so for studies concerning education outside 'the west'. I would also like to flag up the paucity of research in both education geographies and children's geographies (with the exception of Cheng's 2015 forthcoming paper) that studies how students in Singapore are implicated in the city-state's rapidly globalising landscape. This scholarship trend is especially alarming, especially when a myriad of works surrounding globalisation and neoliberalism (see for example, Ong, 2006) have noted the different impacts of these processes in East Asia due to the states' developmental trajectories. As established in the previous section, education is a dynamic field affected by processes of globalisation, therefore we need to adopt critical ways of thinking through the relations of subject-making in globalisation in order to study the spatialities of education. There is therefore a need to centre young people's voices and subjectivities in our studies of education, so that we can not only move

beyond engaging with the field of education in an 'outward-looking' manner, but also glean a very different perception of education in-relation to the globalised world, through the eyes of young people.

2.3.2 Embodiment and the Performative Geographies of Young People

The literature on globalisation and childhood demonstrates the importance of centering the subjectivities of young people. One of the approaches that geographers have adopted to achieve this is studying how children's everyday lifeworlds are constituted (Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Horton and Kraftl, 2005, 2006a, 2006b), and how childhood is lived and practiced. As highlighted before, education is made up of various contested and potentially conflictual spaces. Children's geographers' engagement with the everyday embodiment and performances has much to contribute towards geographies of education. In Horton and Kraftl's words, attention to everyday lives can allow researchers to "critically ponder some long- and deeply taken-for-granted understandings about 'Growing up'" (2006a:260).

In Bronwyn Wood's (2013) paper on young people and the citizenship curriculum in New Zealand, she looks at how school children often engage in a series of formal and informal politics in the liminal spaces of schools (such as bathrooms) to subvert hegemonic systems. Her studies highlight that through the study of the quotidian (playing, friendship ties and activities such as eating fast food), we are able to rethink what it means for children to assert their agencies and political voices. This shows that ethnographic studies relating to young people's everyday politics are not only essential in uncovering the inequalities they experience in schools, but also extremely useful in helping us study the possible ways in which young people are engaged with tactics of resourcefulness.

Scholars have also situated their studies to look at the embodiment of childhood, and the ways in which the bodily practices of young people are constituted in diverse spaces (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b; Colls and Horschelmann, 2009). Studies on 'the body' and the relations of bodies are important lenses to look at the 'spatialities' of education. However, because contemporary western concepts of education have very much inherited the enlightenment notion of mind-body bifurcation, educational geographies (and to a wider extent, most studies surrounding education) remains a relatively disembodied field, where the development of mental and intellectual faculties are favoured over the corporeal. One of the areas surrounding the engagement with embodiment in children's geographies that is especially applicable to the realm of education is the study of performativity and habitus and how it serves as different forms of capital in young people's lives. For example, in her study of children's aspirations vis-à-vis state policies in the UK, Pimlott-Wilson (2011) argues that habitus is developed from a young age, and predisposes children to behave and draw out certain courses of actions. Habitus is thus a key mode in which children make sense of their future employment. Holt et.al. (2013) have also looked at how embodied habitus can serve as social capital to help young people form fraternal social relationships in leisure spaces. As schools are spaces where young people are taught appropriate knowledges and values on how to behave socially (and as noted in section 2.2, these values are not neutral, but are usually constructed by hegemonic forces at play), habitus can be a potentially important lens to look at the geographies of education. By focusing on the practices, imaginations, and even feelings young people have of education, geographers can be able take into consideration the diverse

subjectifications that are embedded in the landscape of education. I will return to the notion of performance and habitus in the concluding section of this chapter.

2.3.3 Young People's Rights and Agencies

The notion that bodies are always in-the-midst-of becoming, and constitutive of the spaces in which they inhere has prompted geographers to engage with discussions relating to the relationality of age (Hopkins and Pain, 2007; Katz, 2004). The discussions surrounding the everyday performances of young people and bodily matters have allowed us to question and rethink the notions of 'childhood', 'youths', and 'adulthood'. As I have established in the section on education, it is important to take into account the different stakeholders which are involved in shaping the education landscape. As teachers, policy-makers, and school staff play huge roles in crafting out the sociality of schooling as much as the students (or even more so, since adults are seen as individuals with more authorities than young people), the notion of 'relationality' is an important passage for us to think about questions relating to ethics, responsibility and care in the educational landscape.

In Hopkins and Pain's paper (2007), they argue that it is important to think about age as a product of the interactions between different people. This suggests that the identities of children cannot be divorced from that of other age groups, because the notion of being a child is produced through social interactions. Thus, the works on relationality are directly related to issues surrounding children's agency, participation, and rights (Holloway, 2014; Aitken, 2001; Skelton, 2008). In his work, Aitken (2001) highlights the importance of moving away from the conceptualisation that children are always beings that are in need of adult researchers to speak for them. This is dangerous as it stereotypes what being a child means and is, rendering children who

does not fit to the Anglo-American mould of what a child is as “unchild-like”. In a like manner, Skelton (2007), in her work about institutional ethical frameworks which claim to fight for the ‘rights’ of children, argues that frameworks such as the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are based on certain assumptions relating to ethics. Such institutionalised forms of ethics might close down participation instead of engaging them. Such discussions about participation and ethics are essential in discussions surrounding education, because of the highly institutionalised ways in which education is constructed. However, these debates are jarringly absent in the field of geographies of education. I will discuss more about the importance of participation and agency in chapters 4 and 6 of this dissertation.

2.4 Pushing and Advancing the Boundaries: The Emotional Geographies of Education

In the previous sections, I discussed how various scholars conceptualised the educational institution as a governed space where subject-making takes place, and introduced how the burgeoning field of geographies of education seek to address the dynamism of education. In addition, I have drawn out the various ways in which young people are imbricated within the landscapes of education. By studying the works of children’s geographers, I posited that the field of geographies of education has much to draw from children’s geographies. I also established how scholars have pointed out the need to take into account the corporeal aspects of subject-making by studying the everyday lives of young people. In this section, I will expand this notion by looking at how emotions can help us advance the works of geographers who are engaged with the study of education and young people.

2.4.1 Theorising Emotions

Before looking at the intersections between emotional geographies and education, it is essential to first review how emotions are theorised in geography as well as other disciplines within the social sciences. Discussions surrounding emotion in geography have made a noticeable emergence in recent years (Thien, 2005; Pile, 2010). Scholars argue that emotions are inextricably linked with cultural ideologies and social structures (Turner and Stets, 2005). In this section, I draw on theorisations of emotions within geography and the fields of critical theory and social sciences. I posit that the conceptualisation of emotions as both social and political serves as important entry points to look at the geographies of education.

One of the most important turning point in studies surrounding emotions in the social sciences is the recognition that emotions are social constructs, as opposed to the arguments by early psychological studies which states that emotions are personal and purely biological (Turner and Stets, 2005; Soloman, 1998). In the recent decade, scholars have vigorously put forth how emotions are embedded within "cultural ideologies, beliefs, and norms" (Turner and Stets, 2005). The studies of some political scientists and philosophers also show how emotions can be co-opted by politics because it is both social and individual. As Solomon (1998) posits, it is precisely because emotions function by having a *purpose* and *audience* that they can be assimilated within webs of power.

The theorisation of emotions in the social sciences has prompted a surge in scholarly work dealing with emotions in the field of geography. In what may be termed as an 'emotional turn' in geography, geographers argued that embodied emotions are important to the study of space and place because they "have tangible effects on our

surroundings and can shape the very nature of our being-in-the-world" (Davidson and Milligan, 2004:524). The emotional turn is also due to a re-emergence in concern for 'everyday life' and embodied practices in geography that is partially driven by geographers devoted to conceptualising non-representational theories (NRT) in the discipline (Thirft, 1997; in Pile 2010; Anderson and Harrison, 2010). Geographers argue that emotions are important aspects of human experiences which reside in non-representational spheres that escape representational texts such as words. In an "attempt to understand emotion- experientially and conceptually- in terms of its socio-spatial mediation and articulation" (Bondi et.al, 2005:3), the sub-discipline of emotional geographies has emerged. Although the debates within emotional geographies are wide and varied, the core themes that have arisen include studying the relational flows of emotions between people and environments, and the (opoortunities and problems of) representations of emotions.

Geography's concern with the emotional relations between people and socio-spatial contexts are largely informed by the works of post-structural theorists, who are interested in looking at how emotions are embedded within language and power relations (Ahmed, 2004; Massumi, 2002; Isin, 2004). In particular, the concept of 'emotional economy' has been explored by various scholars in a variety of contexts to study how personal and collective emotions are imbued within political ideologies and economic systems to shape different subjectivities. Sara Ahmed's widely-cited work is important in historicising and contextualising the ways in which emotions are constituted, and co-opted for political ends. Importantly, her work looks at how specific emotions, such as fear and hate, are organised into particular discourses and technologies of power. In particular, her concept of 'affective economies' serves as a

good metaphor to describe the social and collective circulation of emotions which organize social realities. For example, through an analysis of hate in the political landscape in the United States and United Kingdom, Ahmed investigates how emotions work through a network of affective economies. She argues that hate is not just a personal feeling, but an emotion produced by nationalistic and racial discourses which circulate between the bodies of the signifiers (non-white people, criminals, foreigners) and inheres upon the society, resulting in acts of differencing (such as physical acts of violence or displacement from certain spaces). In this thesis, I will follow Ahmed's conceptualisation of affect and emotions[1]. Unlike scholars who see affect as *a form of intensity* that is separate from emotion which they consider *a manifestation of affect* (e.g. Thrift, 2004), Ahmed (2014:209) argues that emotions and affect are intertwined.

The significance of Ahmed's work lies in the ways it demonstrates the *political potentialities* of emotions. More importantly, it also highlights that political dispositions of emotions have certain spatialities. This relates to Brian Massumi's (2002) work (which, although primarily dealing with affects, is crucial in helping us to understand this spatiality of emotions). He argues that the reading of affects cannot be divorced from the conditions of contemporary capitalism that we are currently in. He cites how political activities surrounding national security work by feeding on feelings of fear and terror on the global scale, which is perpetuated by the media globally. The sense of fear is also felt through individual bodies. Ahmed and Massumi's theorisations of

[1] While this thesis is aware of the lively debate in academia about the conceptual differences between affects and emotions, it is concerned with the breaking down of the mind/body dualism so as to interrogate the power-relations existing within the realm of education, the choice of using emotions as a primary lens is hence foregrounded. By steering away from distinguishing affect as "pre-personal" and "non-intentional" (Ahmed, 2014:207), and emotions as something personal, I am also moving away from the assumption that the affect/emotion distinction is a gendered distinction

emotions are therefore not only helpful in helping us look at how emotions relate to contemporary politics, but also serve as an important entry point to look at the *geographical* aspects of emotions by highlighting how emotions travel through spaces and scales, a theme that is central to the work of several geographers. For instance, in Thrift's study, he argues that new organisational spaces are set up to signify "youth, buzz and excitement" (2010: 677) for the creation of 'fast subjects' in the workplace. He contends that 'workplace performance' (which I also see as emotional performance) has become a set of embodied resource for key capitalist firms to work with. This gives rise to 'new geographies of circulation', where notions of self-management such as being a creative and sustainable person is circulated and maintained across different industries, organisational sites, and individual bodies. Similarly, the theme of emotional circulation across spatial scales is apparent in Ho's (2014) work on the emotional economy of migration, which she defines as "the way in which the emotions are mobilized by migrants and capitalized upon by migration regimes" (2014:2215). Studying the emotional experiences of Mainland Chinese immigrants residing in Canada and return migrants who temporarily migrated back to China, Ho's work is crucial in highlighting the *fluidity* of emotions across spaces. She argues that migrants will adapt their emotions according to the demands of the migration regime, transgressing "feeling rules" (2014:2215) at times, while managing their feelings according to emotional ideologies conditioned by the global capitalist economy during other times. Given Thiem's (2009) argument that education is a crucial site for us to explore the workings of the neoliberal economy, the concept of 'emotional economy' is therefore a valuable lens for us to elicit when studying the impacts of

personhood in-relation to education and the neo-liberal economy in Singapore's educational landscape.

2.4.2 Towards an Emotional Geographies of Education

Although few studies are committed to investigating the intersections between education, politics and emotions, several scholars in the recent emerging field of emotional geographies have made notable contributions. Such debates span a range of topics which I will explore in this section, including looking at how emotions become a biopolitical tool in the neoliberal education landscape (Gagen, 2014; Brown, 2011; Way 2013); the relations between emotions and young people's lived experiences in schools (Zembylas, 2011; Watkins, 2011; Way, 2013); emotions and embodiment in informal and alternative education (Kraftl, 2013; Wainwright et.al., 2010).

Previously, I have established the connections between education and governmentality, arguing that the realm of education is enmeshed within various political-economic processes, which gave rise to new modes of governing the bodies. This new form of bio-power involves the production of self-regulating workers who are able to make decisions aligned to the cultures of the neoliberal economy. I have also discussed the relations between emotions, politics, and space. A significant theme which arises from such debates is the notion of how emotions are utilised in the educational landscape as a technique of governing. For instance, Brown's (2011) work on the emotional geographies of young people's aspirations for adult life in the United Kingdom studies how the aspirations of young people attending state-funded secondary schools in London are governed by notions of aspirations which are perpetuated in recent British social policies. Brown's work is significant in highlighting how aspirations, serving as "strong emotional impulses" (2011:20), motivate the

children to work towards their anticipated futures. He also demonstrates that aspiration is constituted by "an assemblage of linked attributes" (2011:13) simultaneously produced by the policies of the government, but also limited by social structures, and at the same time, enacted by emotions (such as hopefulness, fear, and excitement). In a like manner, Gagen's (2013) work on emotional literacy in the curriculum of citizenship studies in England and Wales also added new dimensions to the biopolitical aspects of education. In her paper, Gagen shows how emotions are reified into a type of intelligence to be marketed and consumed in schools, in which the end-goal is for students to become ideal citizens. Both Brown's and Gagen's work brings to the fore a new form of governmentality in the education system which makes use of emotions to render processes of power to be invisible. It is only by using emotions as an optic that we are able to disentangle these types of new bio-politics in the context of neoliberalism. At the same time, their studies also demonstrate that emotionality is a useful device to prompt us to be more sensitive to the intersectionality of spatial scales in the production of such new emotional economies.

Another body of work in the emotional geographies of education is concerned with the emotional and social lives of students and teachers in particular educational landscapes (Henry, 2013; Watkins, 2011; Way, 2013; Wainwright et.al, 2010; Youdell and Armstrong, 2011; Hargreaves, 2000). An example is Watkin's (2011) work on the relationships between emotive and pedagogic practices of teachers in contemporary classrooms. Her work pays particular attention to the microgeography of the classroom by looking at teachers' tears as a form of emotional response. She argues that it is important to look at the intersections between space and social identities, because a classroom is a "space of shifting bodies... where various relationships are formed"

(2011:138). Through an analysis of the interplay between the emotional response of the teachers, and how they are interwoven in space, her work reflects how emotions are always a product of the body's engagement in the lifeword. More importantly, Watkins argues that the tears of the teachers emphasise the spontaneous nature of affects and emotions, highlighting that it is an aspect that escapes the discursive. For Watkins, this is an important point, because it shows that there is inter-dependency between teachers and students. This is an opportunistic window whereby "a sense of responsibility" (2011:142) can be enacted in the classrooms. Here, emotion is a valuable tool to look at the interrelationalities of social identities that I have mentioned previously. It brings forth the non-material aspects of how power-relations are constituted in educational spaces.

However, besides studying the microgeographies of specific learning spaces, emotional geographers have also highlighted the importance of exploring the intersections between larger political and economic processes and how such educational practices have implicated young people's lived experiences regarding race, nationalities, and gender (Henry, 2013; Watkins, 2011; Way, 2013; Wainwright et.al, 2010; Youdell and Armstrong, 2011). Zembylas' (2011) empirical work on the emotional geographies of a multicultural school in Cyprus shows how schools are conduits whereby larger political conflicts are played out. Through interviewing and observing the Greek-Cypriot teachers and Greek-Cypriot/Turkish-Cypriot students of a school, Zembylas discovered how racist actions in the school is a reflection of the dominant ideologies in Cyprus. Studying the ways in which Turkish-Cypriots' bodies are being displaced by emotions in school spaces (ie how the hatred of the Greek-Cypriots towards the Turkish-Cypriots caused them to be relegated to the margins of

the classrooms and playground), Zembylas demonstrates that the school is a space whereby racist discourses of the state are being reinforced. Zembylas' work testifies how emotional geographies can offer promising insights to understand the insidious power in which race and ethnicity works in the society. Importantly, Zembylas' work also demonstrates the importance of empirical work surrounding emotions in helping us shed light on how the lives of students are entangled within greater politics, reiterating the importance of taking into account the spatialities of schooling.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

In this section, I look at how the intersections between the different lines of inquiry I reviewed so far can provide a theoretical toolkit for investigating the emotional geographies of education in Singapore. I propose that emotions serve as an important lens to work with the multifariousness of education spaces, and expound on three concepts below that will guide the succeeding empirical chapters: emotional governmentality, performativity of emotions, and emotional tactics. The three conceptual themes are underpinned by the notion that emotions have different orientations, and are inherently fluid and malleable. By studying how emotions are being elicited and enacted by different 'bodies' and spaces (the state, the school, as well as students and teachers), the three concepts also provide different entry points to explore the multifairousness of educational spaces. The three concepts thus work together as scaffolding in response to Holloway et.al's (2010) call for embracing both inward-looking and outward-looking geographies of education, and Kraftl's (2013) argument of examining the spatialities of education that I have expounded on earlier.

(a) Emotional Governmentality

An important point that I have raised throughout the chapter is how education is a field that we should deconstruct. Reviewing the literature surrounding education theories, I demonstrated that education is a dynamic sphere which is shaped by neoliberal forces, and at the same time, also crafts the practices of neoliberalism. I established that governmentality is an important aspect to study in the educational landscape, due to the various ethical implications in the process of subject-making. As Gagen's (2014) paper highlights, emotion is playing an increasingly important role in governing neoliberal subjects. In my dissertation, I will make use of the concept of 'emotional governmentality' to engage with the case-study of Singapore. This is pertinent given that the Ministry of Education (MOE) places huge emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning in its mainstream curriculum. In addition, as most studies of emotional geographies of education are based on Anglo-American case-studies, our understanding of how emotions are experienced and felt in different cultural and social contexts are limited. For example, notions of 'shame' and 'love' might feature and be experienced differently in Singapore, or other parts of Asia as opposed to the United Kingdom. By applying the concept of emotional governmentality to the case of Singapore, I hope to explore the different ways in which neoliberal governing presents itself in different education landscapes.

(b) Performativity of Emotions

As the literature on children and young people shows, it is important to take into consideration the quotidian lives of young people, because mundane sites have the potential to be spaces for children to exercise their agencies. However, as some of the works I have presented in the section surrounding emotional geographies

demonstrate, the focus on the mundane and banal can sometimes be too myopic, as scholars might fall into the trap of paying too much attention to the microgeographies of the classroom without considering how such social relations are conditioned by wider geographical processes in the first place. Additionally, although geographers have been proposing that it is essential for us to look at 'banal' forms of emotions which are circulated within these sites, so as to have a better understanding of how young people are active agents in the landscapes of education, precise theoretical and methodological contributions on how to study such fleeting, non-material representations are lacking. Following Holt et. al's notion of the habitus as a form of becoming produced through "an interaction between individual and collective bodies and socio-spatial contexts" (2013:4), and Gagen's (2104) work on emotional governmentality, I will elicit the notion of 'performativity of emotions' to look at the ways in which students' (and teachers') bodies relate to each other. In doing so, I can look at the multifarious ways in which the educational landscape is co-constituted.

(c) Emotional Tactics and Subversions

Although the burgeoning literature of emotional geographies of education is well-positioned to bridge the research gaps in the fields of children's geographies and the geographies of education, there remain several uncharted territories in this field. Firstly, the study of emotions in social sciences has so far been limited to a few so called "difficult" or "negative" emotions, such as fear, hatred, pain, or even stress. Although Kenway and Youdell argue that there is a "certain productivity in discomfort and in being ungrounded" (2011:135) in studying difficult emotions, I argue that it is still essential to study a spectrum of emotions, including the so called 'positive' emotions such as love and happiness to look at how they are featured in political discourses.

Furthermore, by focusing only on 'difficult' emotions, most researchers have unwittingly ignored how young people are capable of producing their own emotional economies so as to forward their own agendas as well. Relating to the discussions of the rights of young people and ethics surrounding young people, current theorisations of emotions have been focusing a lot on emotions as governing tools, but rarely taking into account the ways in which students (and teachers) can use emotions to subvert hegemonic power. In chapter 6, I will make use of performative emotions to explore how emotions can be utilised as tactics in the classroom and beyond.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter engaged with a wide set of literatures from three sub-disciplinary strands, namely Geographies of Education, Children and Young People's Geographies, and Emotional Geographies. Placing three emerging sub-disciplines into conversation with one another is a challenging, yet riveting task, as the strands diverge and converge in different ways. The conceptual framework thus builds on the notion of emotional economy, to look at how the circulation of emotions in the educational landscape is operated, and in-turn, negotiated by different subjects. This framework will be operationalised in chapters 5 and 6. The next chapter will provide the context to emotional learning in Singapore.

3. Emotion as a 21st Century Tool: The Role of Education in Singapore's Globalising and Nation-building Project

3.1 Introduction

In the previous section, I demonstrated the value of emotional geographies and ,young people's social practices to an analysis of education. I have also established the conceptual framework which informs my research. This chapter provides a contextual framing on how education is mobilised to fulfil Singapore's globalising and nation-building imperatives. In particular, the chapter will introduce how Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is framed by the Ministry of Education (MOE), so as to elucidate the relations between emotions, education, and governmentality. I highlight that a geographical perspective is needed to unpack how the SEL curriculum is enacted by processes which intersect at different spatial scales, as SEL is a tool that is produced to regulate individual bodies, to serve the needs of the global economy and national politics. In **section 3.2**, I will establish the links between education and Singapore's developmental trajectories. Here, I look at how intellectual and technical skills have been the main tenets in Singapore's "globalising education policy" (Koh, 2011:267). Using the example of the 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' model rolled out by the MOE, I explore the ways in which education is implicated within the neo-liberal discourses of global competitiveness and knowledge-based economy. In **section 3.3**, I interrogate how the implementation of SEL and the new CCE curriculum marks a new phase in Singapore's education landscape where "soft-skills" such as emotional competencies and character education become ways for the state to prepare the young to become competent citizen-workers for the neo-liberal economy. Overall, I argue that geographical scales and contexts provide valuable lenses to look

at this new form of governance adopted by the state. It is thus pertinent for geographers to explore the ways in which this new form of governance is enacted, so as to tease out the ethical and political implications of such emerging practices that are happening in the educational landscapes.

3.2 Education and Neoliberal Governmentality in Singapore

Before looking at the education landscape in Singapore, it is important to first situate the city-state within the developmental contexts in which it is embedded. Development of education in East-Asia can be seen as part of the story of the globalisation movement and neo-liberal restructuring. Notably, the birth of modern East-Asian nations, especially the four 'Asian Tigers' (Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan) in the rapidly globalised world is synonymous with the creation of developmental states, where centralised states and government wield power by legitimising themselves and their policies based on high rates of economic growth (Abe, 2006). Due to the nature of neo-liberalism which favours state powers that will create individuals who will help optimise the economy (McGregor,2009), education reforms have become commonplace in East Asia. Education initiatives, such as the provision of primary education and the focus on technical and vocational education have been used by the developmental states to not only develop the human resource they need, but also to "foster a strong sense of social cohesion and political identity" (Morris, 1996:107). Such developmental tactics continue to be characteristics of these states even as they shifted their focus from the industrial sector to the service and finance sectors in the dawn of the new millennium.

The case of East Asia not only exemplifies how education is implicated within the processes of neo-liberalism, but also nudges us towards thinking about the relations

between neo-liberalism and education in terms of governmentality. As established in the previous chapter, governmentality refers to the practices and techniques in which a population (be it students in a school, patients in hospitals, or citizens in a nation) is governed (Rose, 2004). An important aspect of governmentality involves not only 'top-down' hegemonic power, but also the elaborate ways in which power is dispersed and networked. According to Foucault (1991), governmentality is contingent to the historical periods in which it is being played out, as different power regimes are characterised by different forms of knowledge production which creates self-regulating subjects. In Katharyne Mitchell's work on neoliberal governmentality in the European Union, she argues that there are increasingly neoliberal forms of governmentality in the educational sector of the European commission, in terms of policies and programmes created to produce "mobile, flexible, and self-governing" (2006:389) labourers. There is a parallel between the case of the EU and the education system in Singapore, whereby the state utilises "techniques of optimisation" (Ong, 2004:6) made up of an array of knowledge and system in order to produce enterprising citizens with the right skills and mindset to excel in the neoliberal economy. Indeed, amongst the Asian economies, Singapore's education system is arguably the most "recognised around the world" (MOE, 2012), where students are rigorously prepared to "meet the challenges in a knowledge economy and enhance the country's competitive edge" (Tan and Ng, 2007: 155).

The exercise of neoliberal governmentality in Singapore's education sector can be traced back to the period between the late 1990s to early 2000s, where increasing emphasis was placed on education to ensure that Singapore meet the demands for economic competitiveness in the global market. Having been heavily focused on

academic and technical skills for the past decades, the Singapore Government postulated that there is a "lack of entrepreneurial flair" (Gopinathan, 2007:42) as well as a "lack of creative capital" in the workforce. As the neoliberal market is also a knowledge-based economy which relies on workers who are innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial, the state launched a landmark educational reform in 1997, dubbed the "Thinking School Learning Nation" (TSLN). There are four major thrusts of TSLN: emphasis on critical and creative thinking, the use of IT in education, national/ citizenship education, and administrative excellence (Gopinathan, 2007). According to the former Prime Minister Goh Cheok Tong, this new education reform is needed so as to ensure that Singapore is prepared for the "intensely global future" (Goh, 1997), one which is characterised by aggressive competition between cities and regions, as well as volatile situations. In the words of Goh:

> "A nation's wealth in the 21st Century will depend on the capacity of its people to learn. Their imagination, their ability to seek out new technologies and ideas, and to apply them in everything they do will be the key source of economic growth. Their collective capacity to learn will determine the well-being of a nation… it will be an intensely global future, with diminishing barriers to the flow of goods, services and information. Competition between cities, countries, sub-regions and regions will be intense. No country or region will have permanent advantages. There is no guarantee that it will always retain its competitive edge." (Speech at the opening of the 7th International Conference on Thinking, 1997).

As the speech by Goh exemplifies, the state sees education, the economy, as well as nationhood as entities that are productively enmeshed. In the words of Massey, Globalisation is a form of geographical imagination, which calls up "a vision of total unfetted mobility; of free unbounded space" (2005:81). Goh's speech is reflective of a world which is fast-moving, and is unbounded. This imagination of globalisation impacts the realm of national politics, especially in terms of education policies because

it legitimises the discourse of a 'knowledge-based economy' where everyone needs to be equipped with '21st century skills' (see section 3.3). Neoliberalism can be conceptualised as a "new relationship between government and knowledge" (Ong, 2006:3), whereby neoliberalism serves as a technology for governing based on market-driven truths and calculation. Thus, the TSLN framework can be seen as a vehicle for the state to produce and legitimise neoliberal discourses of creativity, flexibility, and entrepreneurialism. As a framework which will guide school programmes and curriculums, the TSLN is a site for producing knowledge and neoliberal sensibilities to be consumed by the masses.

In his paper, Thrift (2010) argues that neoliberal governmentality produces new geographies, where spaces are constituted by new spaces of embodiment and circulation which can support creativity. Thus, one may ask, what kinds of new geographies does Singapore's neoliberal regime produce? Reading the speech critically, one can argue that Goh is trying to instil a certain 'neoliberal sensibility' amongst the populace, by highlighting that the well-being of the nation-state is tied to the world economy. If the citizens do not have the "capacity to learn" and be equipped with new skills needed for them to survive in the highly-competitive world, Singapore will lose out as a country and pay a high economic (and hence social) price. Here, we can see that education sites are emerging spaces created by the neoliberal regime where neo-liberal technologies are being exercised onto the bodies of the students. Therefore, in investigating the ways in which Singapore's education is impacted by neoliberalism, one has to necessarily take a geographical approach to explore how the state's imagination of globalisation produces new education spaces. A scalar approach is also needed as neoliberal governmentality is inevitably about the inscription of

different forms of conduct upon individual bodies so that they are able to perform those neoliberal sensibilities of being creative, fast, and entrepreneurial.

3.3 Emotion as Competency: Cultivating Self-governing Citizen-workers

While the key aim of the TSLN is to ensure that Singapore stays economically relevant to the global market by expanding the populace's capacity to learn the 'right skill-set', the education reform does not only involve reviewing the curriculum and assessment system in terms of content or academic knowledge. In fact, a decade after TSLN was launched, the ministry also rolled out another framework to help support the reform. The scheme is dubbed "21st Century Competencies", and is a framework "which underpin[s] the holistic education that… schools provide to better prepare…students for the future" (MOE, 2014). According to the MOE, values and SEL are important 21st Century skills because:

> "Knowledge and skills must be underpinned by values. Values define a person's character. They shape the beliefs, attitudes and actions of a person, and therefore form the core of the framework of 21st Century Competencies.
>
> The middle ring signifies the Social and Emotional Competencies – skills necessary for children to recognise and manage their emotions, develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, as well as handle challenging situations effectively." (MOE, 2014).

The 21st Century Competencies are guided by the TSLN's discourses of competition, creativity, and entrepreneurism to legitimise new school programmes. Moreover, what is so striking about the 21st Century Competencies framework is the ways in which emotional learning is being emphasised. As evident from the "swiss roll" chart **[Plate 1]**, the key skills (represented by the core ring and the middle ring) that are

identified are not 'hard' skills such as communication and IT skills. Rather, they are 'soft' skills such as values and social and emotional skills.

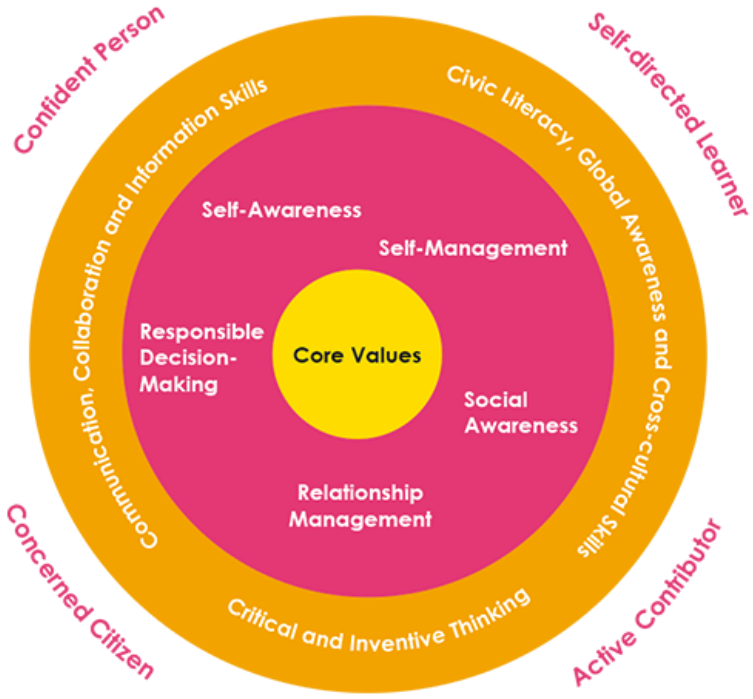


Plate 1: "swiss roll" chart depicting the range of 21st Century Competencies identified by the MOE. Note how social and emotional skills occupies a big part of the chart (Source: MOE, 2014).

The emphasis on values and SEL highlights that the cultivation of knowledge workers for an economy which is highly unpredictable and fast-moving involves a form of governmentality underpinned by emotional and cultural knowledge. This impartation of self-management skills takes place in schools through programmes such as Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) and Values in Action (VIA), cyber-wellness classes, as well as sexuality education (MOE, 2014). The establishment of the SEL programme resonates with Thirft's work, where he argues that the new form of governmenality in the neoliberal economy involves the production of 'fast subjects', which are subjects who are capable of adapting to the rapidly-changing economy. Thift posits that these subjects are engineered through various "practices of inscription onto

the management body" (2010:680), such as a series of *experiential* training. In other words, these 'fast subjects' are not only produced through the impartation of knowledge, but also the *performance* of such knowledge in their everyday lives **[Plate 2]**. Indeed, as stated by the MOE, SEL[1] competencies should be taught to the students to ensure that they acquire the "*dispositions* that will help them face future challenges" (MOE, 2014).

Key Domains of Social and Emotional Skills	Description
Self Awareness	Identifying and recognising emotions
	Accurate self-perception
	Recognising strengths, needs and values
	Self-efficacy
	Spirituality
Social Awareness	Perspective taking
	Empathy
	Appreciating diversity
	Respect for others
Self Management	Impulse control and stress management
	Self-motivation and discipline
	Goal setting and organisational skills
Relationship Management	Communication, social engagement and building relationships
	Working cooperatively
	Negotiation, refusal and conflict management
	Seeking and providing help
Responsible Decision Making	Problem identification and situation analysis
	Problem solving
	Evaluation and reflection
	Personal, moral and ethical responsibility

Plate 2: Key domains of SEL skills (Source: MOE, 2014).

[1] SEL competencies can be taught explicitly in the classroom, during CCE lessons, or infused in the general curriculum, where the SEL competencies are covertly taught to the students in their academic subjects and other school activities.

As plate 2 demonstrates, the huge focus on SEL in the 21st Century Competencies shows us that neoliberal governmentality is not only about governing through one's actions, but also through emotions (in which emotions and performance are inexplicably intertwined), which Gagen refers to as the "emotionalisation of conduct" (2013:4). As mentioned in the previous chapter, emotions can be co-opted to serve various political ends. In this case, emotional competencies as well as emotional intelligence have been co-opted by the state as a form of intervention to produce desirable bodies for the neoliberal market.

Finally, it is important to note that the learning of emotional competencies is framed as an individual and familial responsibility as much as the state's. In the words of MOE, "schools and parents need to work hand-in-hand to help our students develop these 21st century competencies" (MOE, 2014). As governmentality is about a series of technologies working together to ensure self-governance, schools should not seen as the only spaces where neoliberal subjectivities are being crafted. The mechanisms for instilling emotional knowledge to the population involves a slew of hegemonic, individual, and collective efforts to govern the conduct of the population.

3.4 Conclusion: "Feeling Schools, Affective Nation"

This chapter has provided a summary of how education is related to Singapore's globalising and nation-building goals. I paid attention to the ways in which education reform in the recent decades have been devoted to fulfilling the discourse of needing to stay relevant in the neoliberal economy. Using governmentality as a lens, I also explored how education policies became the main engines in which new forms of subjectivities are forged. Besides focusing on crafting students into individuals who are creative and entrepreneurial, and equipped with 'hard skills' such as IT, the state has

also been emphasising emotional skills. This highlights a new form of disciplinary regime whereby one's emotional faculties, as well as psychological and behavioural life become sites for the state's power to act upon. Thus, instead of a "Thinking School, Learning Nation", we might speak of a "Feeling School, Affective Nation". To study the 'new geographies' of education not only involves studying distinct educational institutions or schooling spaces, but requires an analysis of how different geographies are being reworked. In this case, we need to study how a nation-state's imagination of global processes has impacts on individual bodies. It is therefore also important to examine the processes of cultivating neoliberal subjectivities. Having presented the theoretical framing of the research in the previous chapter, and the contextual framing in this, I now move on to discuss the methodological scaffolding of this study.

4. Methods and Methodologies

4.1 Introduction

In the previous section, I established the conceptual framework which informs my research. The conceptual framework draws on the three bodies of literature concerning emotional geographies, educational geographies, as well as children and young people's geographies. In this section, I will discuss the methodologies and research design that I employed in the study.

The methodology that frames my research is premised on two concerns. Firstly, as my research is fore-grounded on the ways in which emotions are co-produced and circulated in the realm of formal education in Singapore, my research design will necessarily need to take into account the study of emotions in educational institutions in Singapore. Thus, I have to be sensitive about the "emotion work" (Bondi, 2005:232) that is involved in my research, in terms of the ways that I study the emotions produced and circulated in the field by different actors/actants, as well as the ways in which my own emotional labour (relating to my feelings within the field, as well as towards my wider academic research) come into play during the research. Secondly, as my research pays significant attention to the social lives of young people, my research design needs to take into consideration the ways in which I can engage with them. Various scholars have written about the need to develop and carry out children/young people-centered research methods, as traditional methods have been "criticised for carrying out research *on* rather than *with* children" (Barker and Weller, 2003:33), whilst others have highlighted the importance of taking into account issues of power and positionality (Barker and Smith, 2001; Darbyshire et.al, 2005).

Taken together, these points highlight the need for a research design that is engaging for the participants, and allows for the adoption of reflexivity at all stages of the research process. The methodological framework also needs to be sensitive to the inter-corporeal exchanges between different subjects (teachers, students, staff, and myself as a researcher), in and across different spatial scales (from individual bodies, schooling spaces, as well as the national and global scales). Therefore, I adopted a mixed-method methodological framework which encourages a deeper and more complex understanding of how the emotional and social lives of various educational stakeholders are entangled with the larger state discourses. In the sections that follow, I explain the particularities of conducting fieldwork in educational institutions in Singapore, as well as the process of assembling participants for the research. After which, I then discuss the four methods I used, namely a photo reflection exercise using a social media application, *Instagram*; in-depth interviews; school and classroom obsrvations; and discourse analysis. Lastly, I will reflect on and examine some of the ethical and methodological issues I encountered during the fieldwork before concluding the chapter.

4.2 Establishing Research Spaces and Assembling Participants

Central to Sara Ahmed's thesis on emotions is the idea of the 'doing' of emotions. In her words, "emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are *lived as worlds*" (2014:191, my emphasis). There is something very geographical about Ahmed's work, which point towards the importance of looking at emotions in the specific *contexts and spaces* in which they are produced. Therefore, in studying the emotional landscape of education in Singapore, there is a need to carefully consider what kinds of spaces I can base my research on,

as well as *whose voices* I need to listen to during my research. This section will establish the nuances of conducting educational and emotional research in Singapore. I will elaborate on the contextual particularities which influenced my choices and fieldwork process.

For a month, I carried out my ethnography in a mainstream secondary school in Singapore (see section 3). I decided to conduct my research in the setting of a school because it is the main site where institutionalised norms are disseminated and taught to the masses. Furthermore, geographers have argued that "schools are central to the social geographies of everyday life" (2008:281). In the previous chapters, I have briefly explained how, as a main engine of economic growth and tool for nationalism, formal education is very much emphasised in the society. The importance and primacy of formal education is reflected by the enrollment rates of students in mainstream schools. According to Singapore's education statistics, a total of 487,342 students were enrolled in Singapore's mainstream schools, comprising of Primary, Secondary, Junior College/Centralised Institutes, and out of those enrollments, 184,304 students were enrolled in Secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2013). Mainstream government schools are therefore worthwhile sites to explore how policies are activated, negotiated, and contested on the ground.

As few ethnographies are done within the boundaries of mainstream schools due to the high gate-keeping in Singaporean government institutions, I found it difficult to gain access to government schools. I also had to work with a short timeline (since my fieldwork period had to coincide with the school's semester timings as well as non-examination periods so as to prevent disruptions). This meant that I could not conduct fieldwork in multiple schools. Drawing on my personal connections as an individual

who has worked in school settings both in the private and public sectors, I managed to gain access to a mainstream secondary school. It is useful to note that the purpose of the fieldwork is not to generalise my findings based on a single school. Rather, the fieldsite provides a fruitful lens in which we can look at some of the ways in which education politics in Singapore can play out spatially and socially.

In my fieldsite, I was allowed free access to the various parts of the school, including classrooms, canteen, the library, assembly hall, and even the staff rooms. The bulk of my research involved a total of *31 participants*, of which *11* of the participants are schoolteachers, and *20* of the participants are students studying in the school **[Tables 1 and 2]**. The teachers were recruited based on my personal networks, and also by snowballing. I was careful to select teachers with a variety of teaching experiences and backgrounds, so that I can garner a myriad of perspectives. As I had no access to the students, recruitment was done through their teachers. I briefed the teachers about my project, as well as the selection criteria (relating to gender/ age, etc). Four students from each academic level (secondary one through five) were selected with the help of their form teachers. As "gathering or generating data always draws researchers into relationships" (Bondi, 2005:236), I established close ties with some staff members as well as students who were not formally recruited as my fieldwork participants through my interactions with them. Hence, it has to be noted that I interacted informally with more than thirty people during the course of my fieldwork.

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Other Details
Emily	Chinese	Female	Secondary 1 student, 13 years old
Zoey	Chinese	Female	Secondary 1 student, 13 years old
Zach	Filipino	Male	Secondary 2 student, 14 years old
Clement	Chinese	Male	Secondary 5 student, 17 years old
Mari	Filipino	Male	Secondary 5 Student, 17 years old
Shirley	Chinese	Female	Secondary 5 Student, 17 years old
Vongola	Chindian	Male	Secondary 5 student, 17 years old
Mages	Indian	Female	Secondary 1 student, 13 years old
Cui Fen	Chinese	Female	Secondary 2 student, 14 years old
Ahmad	Malay	Male	Secondary 2 student, 14 years old
Katherine	Chinese	Female	Secondary 2 student, 14 years old
David	Chinese	Male	Secondary 1 student, 13 years old
Michael	Malay	Male	Secondary 3 student, 15 years old
Alicia	Chinese	Female	Secondary 3 student, 15 years old
Dashy	Indian	Female	Secondary 3 student, 15 years old
Putri	Malay	Female	Secondary 4 student, 16 years old
Bryan	Chinese	Male	Secondary 4 student, 16 years old
Natasha	Malay-Chinese	Female	Secondary 4 student, 16 years old
Rachael	Chinese	Female	Secondary 4 student, 16 years old
Muz	Malay	Male	Secondary 3 student, 15 years old

Table 1: Demographics of student participants for photo-reflection project and interviews.

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Other Details
Vidya	Indian	Female	Teacher with three years of teaching experience
Elaine	Chinese	Female	Teacher with five years of teaching experience
Kay Seng	Chinese	Male	Teacher with 10 years of teaching experience
Sabirah	Malay	Female	Teacher with 14 years of teaching experience
Jackson	Chinese	Male	Teacher with four years of teaching experience
Aishah	Malay	Female	Teacher with 16 years of teaching experience
Sabhya	Indian	Male	Teacher with 20 years of teaching experience
Stephen	Chinese	Male	Teacher with 15 years of teaching experience
Wanjun	Chinese	Female	Teacher with one year of teaching experience
Huijuan	Chinese	Female	Teacher with 37 years of teaching experience
Jason	Chinese	Male	Teacher with 11 years of teaching experience

Table 2: Demographics of teachers who participated in the interviews.

4.3 Research Methods

In the introduction of this chapter, I explained how my fieldwork is influenced by two conditions, that is, the need to take into account how to factor in emotionality and reflexivity in my research, as well as to elicit young people's participation. In this section, I will discuss the four methods that I employed in my study. I have chosen to adopt a mixed-method because it allows the researcher to gain "deeper and more complex understandings of social processes" (Hemming, 2008:152). The photo-reflection exercise, participant observations, and in-depth interviews were designed to

work together so that I could adopt a more reflexive and collaborative approach throughout the research process.

4.3.1 Photo Reflections Using Instagram

One of the methods that I utilised in my fieldwork is that of a visual methodology using a social media application (app) called Instagram. Unlike social media websites that are originally confined to the boundaries of computers such as Facebook and MySpace, (Asur and Huberman, 2010), social media is now available, and made even more accessible to the masses, by mobile apps. Instagram is one of the most popular Social Media App (SMA). It is a photo-sharing app which allow users to take pictures with their phone, and edit them aesthetically using 'filters' to share with their friends or 'followers' who are also using the same app. The popularity and ubiquity of SMAs such as Instagram is highlighted by the usage of new terms that have infiltrated our everyday lives, such as the word 'selfie' (shorthand for 'self-photograph'), which is the Oxford Dictionary's Word of the Year (*Time*, November 18 2013).

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I met up with the twenty student participants recruited by their teachers. The participants were briefed about the Instagram photo-reflection exercise, as well as the follow-up interview. The idea was for the students to take and upload pictures which reflect their school lives and their feelings associated with school. As a reflective exercise, the students were also encouraged to type accompanying captions together with the pictures they uploaded to explain what they were thinking and feeling when they took the photographs. I also explained to them that we would be discussing the pictures during the interviews in order to gain insights into their social and emotional spaces of schooling. Although most of my participants are experienced Instagram users, it was the first time their photos would be used in a

research setting. As a way to ease them into the project, a brief guide on some of the ways to start the project was given to them during our first meeting. The students were encouraged to be playful and creative with their photographs. At the end of the project, 70 photographs were submitted.

Part of the rationale behind the choice of this method draws on the work of scholars who have written about the politics of doing research and carrying out fieldwork with children, where researchers have argued that developing children-centered methods are important because children find "traditional methods such as questionnaire surveys either intimidating...inappropriate...or boring" (Young and Barrett, 2001:36). Geographers have also highlighted the importance of critically interrogating how we can conduct research with children by taking note of power relations in the field (Skelton, 2007; Valentine, 1999; Matthews and Tucker, 2000). In recent years, visual methods have gained popularity because they are engaging, fun, and are able to dismantle the unequal power-relations between the adult researcher and child participant, because children are able to have a sense of ownership over their creations (maps, drawings, photographs).

My methodology thus speaks to the existing debates of power-relations and representation. The choice of using Instagram as a visual tool stems from my realisation that school-going teenagers in Singapore are active users of the app. This is especially so for secondary school students (13-17 years old), who like to chronicle their daily lives by posting pictures on Instagram. While each of my Instagram pictures will typically garner 20-30 'likes' (typical of any non-celebrity Instagram users), it is not uncommon for teenagers in Singapore to have more than a hundred 'likes'. Furthermore, Instagram photographs make use of what the students already have-

their mobile phones. This is not only cost-effective, but also gives them a greater sense of control because they are using their own belongings to record their school lives. The fluency and familiarity of using the app was evident during my research process. This is helpful in allowing the students to have the confidence to ask questions pertaining to the project, provide suggestions, as well as to be creative with their submissions. For example, during our first meeting, the students discussed the suitable number of pictures to upload. The students were also encouraged to contact me if they wanted to clarify any doubts they had regarding the project if needed. As a result, conversations about the project were made throughout the project and not just at the beginning. Most of the time, the students were the ones steering the directions of the project. As the students were already avid users of Instagram, they were able to have a sense of ownership over the project. This helped me to move away from the unequal adult/child relationship which other traditional methods might afford.

Another reason for my choice of using a visual methodology is the ways in which images and photography are able to portray and transmit emotions that spoken and written words cannot. A plethora of debates academia hinges on the problem of interpreting emotions. Although recognizing the importance of emotions in constituting the lifeworld of people, geographers argue that it is difficult to 'do' emotions in the field as emotions are non-material and hence difficult to grasp. As cultural theorist Susan Sontag's (2003) widely cited work on photography highlights, images posses 'haunting' qualities. Other writers, such as Brown and Phu (2014) have also argued that feelings are key to the production and consumption of photography. In fact, not only are photographs 'feely', they are also 'touchy' and manifest in various material forms to implicate our embodiment. The emotional and affectual qualities of photographs were

evident in the students' submissions. Many participants submitted photographs to express their emotions and feelings towards various aspects of their school lives. Instead of having to 'recount' their emotions surrounding a certain topic during the interviews, the students had their own time to examine reflexively what they wanted to share.

The process of thinking through how they want to express their emotions by using pictures and accompanying captions thus made the follow-up interviews more relational and interactive, as we could talk *around* their pictures. I noticed that students were generally uninhibited when it comes to expressing their personal emotions via pictures and captions. This helped to engender feelings of closeness and proximity, and affected our face-to-face relationships because the students felt that they were closer to me after sharing some of their stories to me online. This relates to Longhurst's work on using Skype. Using Ahmed's concept of how emotions are "sticky relations between signs and bodies" (2004, in Longhurst, 2013:671), Longhurst explains how emotions are capable of moving through signs, objects, and bodies to produce intimate forms of communications. The bond that the students have established with me online is capable of 'sticking' beyond the cybersphere, leaking through into our everyday interactions.

Finally, Instagram is a tool to help me overcome the physical limitations of my fieldwork. A key issue which arises from debates surrounding research with young people is how geographical studies should consider young people's "capacity to make their own places, to adapt the environments of others to their own needs" (Sibley and James, 1991:269). As I was only able to be physically present in one place at a time, I can only know bits and pieces of the students' schooling geographies. The photos that

the students submitted were able to give me a deeper and wider understanding of their geographies and their social lives that I could not access physically. For example, the participants submitted pictures of their co-curricular activities, outings, fieldtrips, gatherings with friends, and also 'throwback' pictures of school events from the past **[Plates 3-5]**. This shows that we should take cyberspace in young people's research seriously, and not see them as distinct spheres separate from the 'real world'.

Plate 3.

TO

[redacted] Everything is not good. || Just heard the shittiest news in my life. This sounds super dumb but I just found out that ex-boyfriend cheated on me with my bestfriend for 9 months. Though the r/s ended, it's too hard to swallow. The worst thing was that in the clique that consisted of 4 people (me, my bestfriend, two other girls) the entire clique was aware of what was happening. I was completely kept in the dark. Funny how I was feeling guilty for trying to "overtake" her.
2 weeks ago

Plate 4.

TO

[redacted] throwback to synergy concert ; didn't get to perform but instead, get to be helper. the backstage was dark & boring . so am i. I don't want to be helper but I'm chosen to be one. going to school on sat didn't make my day but friends do. we're having so much fun even though we didn't want to go to school on Saturday. through this whole experience, i learnt that i shouldn't look at the negative side of anything but instead, the bright side! (: for instance, having be able to see & chat with friends on sat isn't a bad idea! (:
15 seconds ago

Plate 5.

Plates 3-5: Examples of the photographs, with accompanying captions that the participants submitted through Instagram. Note that the image on plate 5 is a

'black/blank image' intentionally submitted by the participant to reflect the scene backstage, as well as to mirror her emotions.

4.3.2 In-depth Interviews

I also conducted a series of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the teachers and students from the school (31 participants). Participants were asked to choose if they wanted to do the interviews individually, or accompanied by friends, or in groups. I interviewed 11 teachers and five students individually. One student chose to do the interview accompanied by her two friends, and the remaining participants chose to do the interviews in groups. I conducted three group interviews, with groups varying from two to four participants. During one of the interviews, a group comprised of two participants was joined by their three friends who were originally not recruited by their teachers. Each interviews lasted for thirty minutes to two hours. Some participants requested that I use their real names, while others requested that I use pseudonyms that they chose or I coined for them. The participants were also asked if they would like to choose the interview venues. Most of the interviews with the teachers took place in private areas of the staff rooms, with the exception of one interview that took place in the canteen. Interviews with the students took place mainly at the school café, while I interviewed some students in the canteen, classroom, as well as the school library.

During the interviews, the teachers were asked about their schooling background and/or teaching, as well as their personal experiences and philosophies of teaching. They were also asked to recount key or defining moments in their career, and how they felt about those events. We discussed their emotional attachments (or the lack thereof) to their workplace. Specific questions relating to their opinions about social and emotional learning (SEL) were also asked. I asked the teachers about the various

school programmes relating to values and citizenship education, and how they felt and thought about them. For the interviews with the students, I asked them about their opinions and feeling towards the existing Citizenship and Character Education (CCE) programme. Significant parts of the interviews were devoted to asking them about their personal experiences and backgrounds of schooling, as well as discussing key moments in their schooling life which has affected them significantly. In my interviews with the students, I also employed the strategy of eliciting thicker description of emotions by getting the students to talk about their photo submissions. I used a tablet to show them the pictures they submitted, and we developed conversations surrounding the rationales behind why they submit certain pictures. By looking at the pictures, the students were able to recount key events that they felt were significant to defining their school lives, and their emotions associated with them.

As Skelton (2008) mentioned in her paper on research with children and young people, it is important to take into account the ways in which the researcher relates to the participant. I treated the interviews as a reciprocal process where I also shared with the teachers and students my own experiences of being a teacher and a student to put them at ease, or as a response to similar stories shared by the respondents. As Skelton aptly puts “children often have few formal opportunities to give something back to adults, to people they respect and care about who are not related to them” (2008:25). I found that far from being reluctant to sit through the interviews, the students had a lot to say. During times where I was apologetic towards the students because I was taking up their leisure or study time, they replied that they were happy to contribute towards the project (which they viewed as contributing to the wider society) and to help a researcher who is in need.

4.3.3 School and Classroom Observations

According to geographer Katie Walsh, participant observation is where "the researcher attempts to learn about a particular socio-cultural space and those who inhabit it by taking part and continually reflecting on what is happening" (2009:77). Walsh emphasises that key to participant observation is examining what people in the field do, as opposed to just what they claim to do (which might be the case in interviews or focus groups). Thus, as a complementary method to the aforementioned Instagram project and interviews, I took part in overt participant observations in the school. This is to understand the ways in which emotions are produced and felt in the school through various social interactions and events *in- situ*. The observations were conducted during school curriculum time, such as level assemblies, school assemblies, class interaction periods, and CCE periods. I also had the opportunity to take part in the school's national day celebrations, as well as a geography fieldtrip. During my 'free time', I also hung out in the staff rooms, as well as the canteen and café to interact with the teachers and staff. By being in different settings during my ethnography, I was able to witness "an array of embodied and emotional practices as they are experienced and performed by those involved" (Anderson and Jones, 2009, in McMorran, 2012:491).

Geographers who are sceptical of doing non-representational fieldwork often point towards the futility of grasping emotions in the field (Lorimer, 2005). As mentioned in the previous section, there are also ongoing concerns of representing emotions in the field, especially emotions that do not belong to the researcher. Indeed, how does one gain knowledge on what is within the bodies of others? As with Ahmed, and other phenomenologists (Massumi,2002; Merleau-ponty,1945), I argue that emotions are not personal, but rather, shared. Ahmed's works on encounters highlights that the field is

not a given, but produced by embodied social practices that are emergent. Ahmed's focus on embodiment and corporeality in the production of emotions is a useful approach to 'do' emotions in the field. Instead of just studying expressed emotions, I looked at how emotions were *performed*, by taking into account gestures, conversations, and other embodied aspects of schooling. During the ethnography, I not only observed and looked at how things happened (events) and proceeded to jot them down in my fieldnotes, but also continually adopted a reflexive approach, where I took notice of the ways in which different bodies and emotions enfolded and unfolded in the space of the school, and why it is so. For example, when I observed a fight in the classroom, or a class getting reprimanded by their form teacher, I reflected those events upon the wider contexts in which they are situated in (e.g schools as disciplinary regimes etc).

Moreover, it has to be noted that I did not merely partake in the fieldwork by merely *looking*. As emotions are relational and stick to bodies, it was important for me to be aware of how I felt, as well as the comportment of my body in the field. My experiences of participating in school events, negotiating access to certain classes (which can be controversial, such as that of sexual education lessons), as well as sharing the emotional joy, fear, or stress with the staff and students under various circumstances were all important entry points to provide insights into the emotional landscape of the school that are otherwise impossible to learn. Instead of being an omniscient all-knowing observer, I was also constantly aware that it was through my own body and emotions that I am observing the world. However, while emplacing myself into the field that I was studying, I did this with care, so as to prevent my analysis from becoming

omphaloskeptic[2]. Taking note of my own emotions in the field was not an end-point. Rather, it was important to take a step back and ask myself 'why do I feel a certain way' and 'what compelled me to behave in certain ways'. Filling in my field-journal is an important aspect of being reflexive in the field. My work in the field can be seen as a form of recursive emotional work, a form of "perpetual self-questioning, the emotional labour of asking yourself what to do" (Ahmed, 2014:217). By accepting that my state in the field would constantly be in a state of oscillation and questioning, I moved away from the fallacy of non-representational research, and that is, quoting Lorimer, a "persistent urge to define fixed meanings from the midst of things" (2005:91).

4.3.4 Content and Discourse Analysis

Finally, I did content analysis of primary data in tandem with discourse analysis. Content analysis is a methodology for analysing various sources, such as "news media, policy documents, letters, and even video or novels" (Baxter, 2009:275), while van Dijk (1993) defines critical discourse analysis as a framework for asking critical questions surrounding hegemonic narratives. For my research, I analysed various press-releases, newspaper articles, and websites surrounding education policy in Singapore. I paid particular attention to materials which covered the moral, values, citizenship and emotional education syllabi, as well as general commentaries about emotions in Singapore. I also went beyond the conventional sources by looking at the social media sites owned by MOE, such as on Facebook, where they upload articles and videos relating to various education initiatives. As part of the thesis investigates the relationship between emotions produced by the state and the emotions produced

[2] Derived from Greek words "omphalos" (navel) and "skepsis" (the act of looking). The term thus refers to navel-gazing, or self-absorption.

by the subjects, the content and discourse analysis is useful to look at the various modes in which emotions are legitimised and normalised.

4.4 Methodological Concerns

I have already discussed some of the ethical and methodological concerns in the sections above. In this section, I will supplant my discussions by examining some other concerns that were not addressed. Firstly, I want to reflect on my positionality in the field. Longhurst defines positionality as "a person's position within the midst of complex, shifting and overlapping political, economic, cultural, social, sexual, gendered, and racialised processes" (2009:583). During the course of my research, I had to negotiate and take note of my overlapping identity as a female postgraduate student who was seen as an 'outsider' and an inexperienced young person by the staff in the school, but also at the same time treated by the students as an adult who wields some form of authority over them. While interacting with the staff in school, especially when I was recruiting interviewees or negotiating access, I emphasised my identity as an aspiring educator who will be joining the service in the near future. I found this useful, as it helped to establish a sense of trust and commonality amongst the teachers and myself. At the same time, I also did my best to play down on my 'adult' identity in front of the students, by dressing slightly more casually than the teachers in school (for example, by wearing jeans instead of corporate wear), and to encourage them to refer to me by my first name. However, I constantly found my efforts being undermined by the staff in school. For example, some teachers would insist on making their class stand up to greet me during their lessons, even when I tried my best to enter the room quietly by the back door. The teachers also preferred the students to address me as "Miss Ang" (as they would if I was their teacher) even after I suggested that students

could address me by my first name. These experiences show that researchers are always "constituted by, and placed within particular power relations" (Barker and Smith, 2001:145) which we cannot overcome sometimes. However, although I was unable to circumvent these situations, the events are telling of the wider power structures that are played out in the space of the school. For example, from these experiences, I came to understand how values education in Singapore are activated by the bodies of teachers, where students are taught how to comport their bodies to show respect to staff in school.

Another challenge I faced related to issues of access. As McMorran (2012) highlighted in this paper about embodied working methods, one of the main limitations of embodied fieldwork is that the researcher will not be able to access all areas of a field at the same time. Working in an institution, I found this to be very true. Although I was able to transgress many spaces by using social media, I was still unable to physically enter the more 'private' spaces in the school. For example, during my ethnography, the school served as a headquarters for a day to train teachers for the new sexuality education syllabus. Even though the event was highly relevant to my study of how emotions such as love are institutionalised in the school setting, I was unable to attend the event because I was not a trained teacher. There were also important 'emotionally charged' spaces that I could not access, such as the school's detention and discipline room, as well as counseling room. It is highly ironic that some of the staff who engage in obvious 'emotional work', such as the custodian officer and the counselor rejected my requests for interviews. However, lessons can be drawn from my exclusion from such spaces. The refusal for the staff to participate in my project not only highlights how negative emotions are treated as sensitive topics, it also

points towards the efforts for 'undesirable emotions' to be kept invisible in the school's landscapes. Students who embody such undesirable emotions need to be taken out of the classrooms and the rest of the school where 'normal' bodies are, and contained within the special rooms. This shows how the space of the school needs to be constantly regulated, so that the 'contagious' negative emotions will not affect the other bodies primed for learning.

Finally, I want to critically reflect on some of the challenges my participants faced when they were using Instagram. While I observed that Instagram is an excellent platform for students who are not 'good with words' to express their emotions easily, some of the participants revealed to me that the seemingly 'fun' and 'easy' task was actually quite challenging to them. They told me that although they are avid users of the app, they found it hard to frame their photographs, or find appropriate photographs to convey what they want to express because they want to convey specific emotions and meanings through their pictures. For some participants, it was quite a time-consuming process. However, this does not negate the merits of the methodology. Rather, this highlights that Instagram should not be used merely to collect photographs. When using Instagram as a platform to look into the emotional lifeworlds of its users, researchers should also focus on the *process* of creating the photographs and captions. Indeed, for the student participants, Instagram became a medium (at least during the course of the project) where they were learning how to be reflexive in their thinking.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological considerations of doing emotional fieldwork with young people, in the context of an educational institution in Singapore. I explained how, by adopting a mixed-method framework, I am able to explore the process of subject-making in the emotional landscape of the school (as well as emotional landscapes beyond the boundaries of the school). By doing this, I acknowledge that there is no one single way of capturing emotions and performances in the field. Rather, we can only look at different aspects of how emotions work and travel. Indeed, "[b]ody-subjects are not simply subject to external agency, but are simultaneously agents in their own social-construction of the world" (O'Loughlin, 2005:9). At the heart of my methodological framework is how emotions and bodies are always in the process of creating themselves and shaping the spaces around them. In subsequent chapters, I will explore how such a framing of emotions can prompt us to ask ethical and political questions surrounding the emotional geographies of education.

5. Emotions and Values Education as 'Holistic Learning': Producing the Ideal Citizen-worker of the Future

5.1 Introduction

Plate 6: Instagram photo submitted by Bryan, describing how Project Resilience (a Values in Action programme) was one of the most memorable schooling events for him.

In Chapter 3, I explored the ways in which education in Singapore is embroiled in the nation-state's neoliberal sensibilities and nation-making imperatives. In particular, I charted out how the inclusion of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), together with the new Citizenship and Character Education (CCE) syllabus marks a new point in Singapore's educational landscapes where emotional knowledge (rather than merely cognitive knowledge) is utilised to fulfil the nation-state's political and economic goals. In doing so, I flagged up the importance of studying the 'new geographies' of

education, especially one which pays attention to the emotional lives of students and teachers. The Instagram screengrab **[Plate 6]** presented above captures this significant moment in Singapore's educational landscape, where institutional restructurings have redefined the boundaries of school life beyond that of academic activities and achievements. The picture, shared by a senior student Bryan, showcases his experience of participating in a school programme called Project Resilience. According to the students, Project Resilience is an annual school event, where the graduating students spend nearly 12 hours trekking from a beach to the school, along the eastern coast of Singapore (a route spanning 26km). It is noteworthy that Bryan was not the only one who submitted photos regarding Project Resilience. Most of the graduating students also sent similar photos to me, and talked about their arduous experiences of trekking. It is also interesting to hear that the students classify the event as one of the most memorable school events they participated in throughout their four or five years of secondary school lives. Vongola, another student, related to me his experience:

> "we walked (for) 26km […] obviously when we were walking all of us feel tired and all that […] but we cheered each other up, and we motivated each other, so that we were able to complete the walk together as a class… it made our class spirit strong" (Vongola, group interview, 2014).

It is particularly salient that in the students' accounts of Project Resilience related to me during the interviews, considerable discussions were about the physical, mental and emotional challenges that they had to face during the course of the walk. It is also equally striking to note that the students learned lessons about grit and teamwork through the emotional gratifications they felt at the end of the walk, where class camaraderie is established. The students' accounts of Project Resilience highlights

how ‘learning’ in Singapore is now defined by the acquisition of various skills beyond merely ‘academic’ knowledge; and demonstrates that emotions play a key role in conditioning students to learn social skills. Furthermore, it is significant that the students picked an event which took place *outside* the physical space of the school as a representation of their most treasured memory of school life. This shows that the study of educational landscapes need to take into account how schooling spaces can consist of both material and non-material spaces within and beyond the physical space of the school. As Kraftl has highlighted in his book, the “physical, material elements of a learning environment can tell us very little when viewed in isolation. The question that then emerges is how all of the other ‘social’ processes that characterise a ‘good education’ might be understood in spatial terms” (Kraftl, 2013:1).

In this chapter, I will examine precisely *how* emotions feature in Singapore’s educational landscape. I do this by looking at the ways in which emotional education has become an insidious form of governance for the Singapore state to craft civic responsibility as well as to prepare young people to be economically relevant and productive in the future. This chapter also seeks to untangle the relationship between emotional learning as well as values and character education. I contend that the study of ‘emotional education’ in Singapore cannot be divorced from the analysis of how the educational system is linked to wider geographical processes occurring in other spatial scales. My main argument is that in the context of education in Singapore, emotions are utilised as a means of ‘priming’ students to become the ideal citizen-worker of the future. Here, emotions are not ‘taught’ to the students in the form of emotional ‘know-how’, but become the *vehicle* to deliver other forms of knowledge deemed more important by the state. Such knowledge (known as the ‘21st century competencies’)

includes social values considered vital for students to grasp in order to excel in the neo-liberal economy and contribute to the nation-state, as well as intellectual knowledge that they can use when they enter the workforce.

In the first section, I will tease out the relationship between emotions and values education in Singapore by studying how SEL and CCE are taught in class. Following, in the second section, I unpack what constitutes "emotional education". By eliciting Engin Isin's (2004) theory of the 'neurotic citizen', and Elizabeth Gagen's (2013) work on emotions and governmentality, I explore why although emotional education is very much spoken about in the curriculum (as a form of 'emotional intelligence'), it is not explicitly taught in class. Finally, the core of this chapter will be devoted to exploring how emotions are utilised to encourage social practices for students to adopt certain values, or adopt a certain bodily outlook. I do so by looking at two examples of CCE programmes drawn from my fieldwork, namely the 'Values in Action' (VIA) programme where students travel abroad for community involvement projects or camps; as well as CCE lessons teaching personal grooming and etiquette. Here, I will make use of the concepts of habitus and emotional capital to look at how emotions are insidiously inscribed onto the bodies of students during school programmes in order to produce a set of desired embodied practices. I show that rather than surfacing as objects to be mastered (i.e. appearing in the curriculum as explicit emotions for the students to master, such as learning to be happy or learning to suppress anger), emotions serve as an 'invisible hand' to create various forms of habitus, so as to incorporate the desired social values into the embodied rituals of the students. This modus operandi of emotions as a conveyance is part of the nation-state's forward-looking model, where

the future is always cast as being in crisis (Tan, 2007), thus justifying the need to be in a constant state of preparedness.

5.2 Emotional Learning or Values and Character Education?

Gagen's work on the Social and Emotional Learning (SEAL) programme in England and Wales shows how the curriculum advances a new form of governmentality whereby citizenship is crafted using "close management of *neurologically* defined emotional behaviour" (2013:2). Using examples drawn from the SEAL lesson plans, such as lessons on self-awareness and mood-shifting, she demonstrates that this production of the new-age self-governing citizens takes place by intervening on brain chemistry. However, it is puzzling that in the context of Singapore, emotional skills are seldom emphasised in the classrooms. Although the SEL syllabus acknowledges that emotional learning is important, school programmes and CCE lessons seldom focus explicitly on emotional self-management. The difference between Singapore's SEL syllabus and the UK's SEAL syllabus thus highlights the need for us to consider how emotions are contingent in the different socio-political contexts that they are operating within.

While I was doing my fieldwork, I expected to observe the ways in which students are taught skills sets pertaining emotions. After all, the learning outcomes of SEL that the ministry of education listed includes "acquisition of skills to recognise and manage emotions" and to "develop care and concern for others" (MOE, 2014). However, I came to realise that CCE classes do not generally focus on imparting emotional skills to the students in the classroom. Instead, the centrepiece of CCE classes seems to be what the teachers and students call "values education". For instance, in a lesson on

"Building Bonds: Building a Strong Family", the lesson objectives are presented in Excerpt 1:

- Describe the impact of resilient families on the nation as a whole, and suggest the values and attitudes we should adopt in building strong, loving, and resilient families.
- Reflect on our role in building loving relationships that would enhance family bonding now and in the future

Excerpt 1: Lesson objectives of a CCA class, as noted during a class observation.

Although "love" as an emotion is highlighted in the lesson objectives, the focus is on the "values and attitudes" for building familial bond instead of how to have loving relationships (or questioning what constitutes those loving relationships). Indeed, throughout the class, there was no mention of familial love, but instead, the discussion centred on discussing the importance of familial values for Singapore as a nation vis-à-vis globalisation (where globalisation is framed as a threat to the 'Asian Values' that the nation is currently embracing). After screening a video entitled "Family Values", the students were asked what they think those 'values' are supposed to be, in which the class was quick to list out (almost mechanically) values such as "responsibility", "understanding", "honesty" and "respect". Throughout my fieldwork, all the lessons I attended took on a similar structure, even if there were a spectrum of topics discussed, such as sexuality, friendship, or even cyber-bullying. The notion of 'values' is at the heart of the lessons, and issues surrounding emotions are strikingly absent, or at most only glossed over.

The absence of discussions surrounding emotions in class was apparent during my interviews. When asked whether they learnt anything about emotions or emotional skills in class, some students replied with a resounding "no". Most of the students also associate CCE classes with values and character education. Zoey, a secondary one

student shared that for her, CCE is to help them have a "better character (and) to become a better person" (personal interview, 2014). Zoey also said that CCE teaches her "school values, like respect (and) integrity". Indeed, teachers and students often conflate emotional learning with values education. Often, during our conversations, teachers find themselves being confused about emotional learning and values education, and thus using the terms interchangeably. For instance, when asked about how does emotional learning or emotions come into play in CCE lessons, Hui Juan, a senior teacher replied:

> "I mean… like your CCE lessons if you talk about, say, respect, then you can (also) bring things like social awareness (into the topic)… because to respect someone you have to be socially aware of people, what are the types of people, all that […]" (personal interview, 2014).

Similarly, the coordinator of the school's CCE programme also expressed her confusion about values and emotions while we were discussing the possible ways of teaching and conveying emotions in CCE classes:

> "Okay, let's talk about computer addiction, its about self-awareness right, the emotion…. So this is when SEL comes in. But I feel one thing is the [pause] what I wanted to (raise) was (the issue of) respect, but respect is value [pause]. That's the thing- sometimes you find it difficult to differentiate between emotion and value." (personal interview, 2014)

As the interviews illustrate, as opposed to Gagen's example of governing by "emotional conduct" (2013:11), it seems that in Singapore, the students' citizenry consciousness are crafted by values. If this is indeed the case, why is there a need for SEL to be emphasised in the school curriculum, and for CCE to take into account SEL?

The subsequent sections will establish the relations between emotional learning and values and character education. Particularly, I will provincialise 'emotional education' in Singapore. While the notion of 'emotional intelligence' in Gagen's work is discussed as a form of governmentality where the citizen's subjectivity is shaped by the psychological knowledge imparted to them, the case of Singapore demonstrates that the role of emotions in education is more complex than that. In the sections that follow, I shall draw on various vignettes in order to explore the ways in which emotions travel and "shape the contours of social as well as bodily space" (Ahmed, 2014:209) in Singapore's education landscape.

5.2.1 What Constitutes 'Emotional Education'?

Bearing in mind that the term 'emotional education' can be utilised in many different contexts, it is necessary to first establish what constitutes 'emotional education' in the case of Singapore. As discussed earlier, Gagen's work shows that the new role for schools in governing the conducts of citizens is through teaching the students "neurological composure" (2013:11) in order for them to be competent in "navigat(ing) an emotionally charged world". Underlying Gagen's work is the assumption that we have entered a new era where emotional knowledge is an important component to craft students' subjectivities. In Gagen's work, she discusses 'emotional education' in the SEAL curriculum in terms of the *specific psychological and behavioural skills that are taught in class*, such as "self-awareness", "managing feelings", "motivation", "empathy" and "social skills" (2013:6). However, as mentioned before, the impartation of such knowledge is strikingly absent in Singapore's CCE lessons. Does that mean that emotional learning does not take place in Singapore's education landscape?

Here, it is useful to read Gagen's work in relation to Engin Isin's (2004) oft-cited thesis on the 'neurotic citizen'. In his work, Isin introduces two interrelated concepts describing the state of biopolitics in the 21st century. The first is the 'bionic citizen', which he defines as "the modern, liberal subject… whose conduct and government were crucial for the wealth and happiness of species-bodies" (2004:222). According to Isin, the bionic citizen is an individual who is well-equipped to calculate risks so as to navigate in the neo-liberal world. In my opinion, Gagen's notion of 'emotional education' can be read as part of the technology to craft the bionic citizen, where the production of emotional knowledge is mobilised and taught to the subject in school, so that s/he has a wide array of emotional materials and practices to govern themselves. In the case of SEAL in the UK, 'emotional learning' is a form of governmentality to craft a competent and self-actualising subject through teaching them how to control undesired emotions, and manifest the desired emotions. Here, emotional learning is presented overtly to the subjects. In turn, the subjects are conscious about how they can utilise such emotional knowledge to "govern themselves to become healthy, wealthy, and happy" (Isin, 2004:222).

However, Isin cautions that the seemingly self-regarding bionic citizen that is governed through its freedom might be "a phantasy" (223). He argues that the bionic citizen cannot account for the most recent power regimes controlling the present societies. He uses another metaphor to describe another form of governance. He coined the term 'neurotic citizen' as a figure who "is incited to make social and cultural investments… by calibrating its conduct on the basis of its anxieties and insecurities rather than rationalities" (223). Linking this concept more explicitly to the realm of emotions, what Isin is arguing for is that instead of being a self-actualising subject who

knows how to manage his/her emotions (as in the bionic subject), the neurotic subject is made to feel *inadequate by his/her own emotions* (specifically by feeling anxious and insecure). This emotional state will then force the subject to conduct him/herself in ways that they think the neo-liberal society needs them to be.

How does this notion of the neurotic subject speak to emotional governance in Singapore's education landscape? Isin's concept of the neurotic subject suggests that the emotions can be used as a tool to *incite* individuals to feel anxious or insecure, and the process of conditioning the emotions is *insidious*. One of the important consequences of this sort of governing is that the subject will be forced to "manage their anxieties by adjusting their conduct". Rather than being taught emotional skills, students are incited to feel certain ways during their schooling lives. The values that are taught and emphasised in schools through the formal curriculum as well as reinforced throughout the entire school environment thus present themselves as part of what Isin calls a "plethora of signs: images, sounds, sights, idols, and smells" (2004:228) that are targeted at the anxieties to calibrate their habits **[refer to sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3]**. The end-go is to compel students to embody certain ideal social values and tune them towards achieving success (by getting good grades, and *aspiring* to become useful citizens or take up certain jobs in the future). As established in Chapter 3, this is exemplified by the learning outcomes stated by the ministry, which highlights that SEL is important for students to "acquire skills, knowledge and dispositions" (MOE, 2014) to prepare them to become competent adults in the 21st Century. Therefore, I would argue that 'emotional education' in this context does not equate to the emotional skills taught overtly during lesson times. Rather, 'emotional education' here consists of using emotional knowledge to condition the students

(subconsciously) so they are compelled to take up other forms of knowledge. In the following section, I will look at how schools are sites for emotional learning to take place, by examining the ways in which teachers and students are implicated in the entire project of producing governable bodies.

5.2.2 "It's Driving Me Insane": Governing Through Stress and Anxiety

According to Bondi et. al, "bodily boundaries are frequently perceived and negotiated in emotionally powerful, disruptive and conflictual ways" (2005:5). They argue that studying embodied emotions is pertinent for the field of geography because our feelings are bound up with various political, social, and cultural regimes. Indeed, our bodies are intensely emotional(ised) sites, and they are more often than not tied to specific spaces and contexts (Domosh, 2001; in Bondi et al, 2005). This insight is pertinent to studying the emotional geographies of education in Singapore, as emotions can serve as an important lens to look at the ways in which power is structured. In the previous section, I argued for a re-definition of what constitutes 'emotional education'. In this section, I look at how the state's rhetoric of 'holistic education' as an ideal but nearly impossible goal is a technology for creating an atmosphere of stress and insecurity amongst teachers and students. This climate of stress provides opportunities for other forms of governing to take place (I explore this in section 5.2.3).

During the course of my fieldwork, I was taken by how *stress* is one of the primary emotions expressed by the students when they discuss their schooling lives, be it during the interviews or photo reflections. Indeed, the Instagram reflections submitted shows that many students are struggling with their heavy academic load, and the stress that they experience does not stop even after schooling hours and outside the

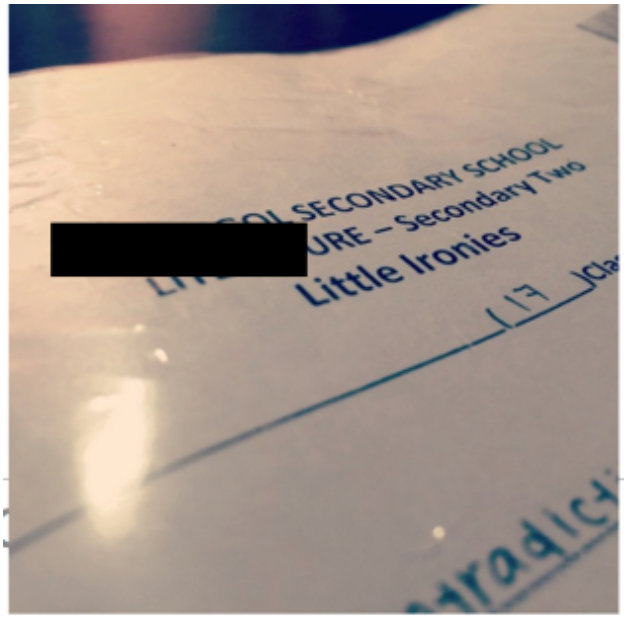
space of the school, as they have to find extra time to cope with their schoolwork at home **[Plates 7-9]**. As the selected pictures and accompanying captions presented show, students often felt overwhelmed by their academic obligations. Kathrine expressed that her homework is "driving (her) insane", while Natasha, a final year student is pushing herself to work hard because of her "horrible" experience of receiving her Chinese language results. Similarly, Cui Fen talks about her feeling of dread while revising her history test. Moreover, the stress that students are facing does not only come from their struggle with studies. Many students are finding it increasingly tough to juggle the demands of academic work, and their co-curricular activities. For instance, when I found out that Emily, a secondary one student had been selected to be the team captain of the school's volleyball club, I asked her how she felt. I expected her to share with me her excitement and joy of heading the club, and was surprised to hear her reply:

> "(I felt) very stressed. I mean like being the captain right… you need to (be) in charge of everything. Then when they (the team members) do anything (wrong), the teacher in-charge will come and find the captain. Then the first thing I will kena[3*] is punishment. Cos my team mates, every time they do (something) wrong […] I will have punishment […]" (personal interview, 2014)

Since emotions are not merely mental states, but also politically and socially constructed (Turner and Stets, 2005), we can argue that these emotional states of students (of feeling stressed and pressured) is produced as a result of Singapore's social, political, and economic response to the demands of globalisation and nation-building. According to Gopinathan (2007), the state's main economic strategy since Singapore's independence has been founded on accepting Singapore's small

3 Singaporean colloquial for "get", in the context of "getting caught" for "getting called on" to do something you are unwilling to.

geographical size and a lack of natural resources, and at the same time focusing on building human capital to drive the economy. Education hence becomes a main sphere for the cultivation of human capital. This is even more apparent in the recent decade, where the 'global war for talent' (Ng, 2005) prompted an education reform to cultivate (and retain) 'talents' who can contribute and compete in the global market. Underpinning the reform is the rhetoric of "holistic education", where schools need to provide "a rich diversity of learning experiences that cater not only to the cognitive aspects, but also the physical, aesthetic, moral and socio-emotional domains" (MOE, 2012). The concept of 'holistic education' to tap into each child's "fullest potential" (MOE, 2012) can be seen as what Isin calls "the impossible" ideal, which students are persuaded into working towards. Thus, it is under this 'holistic education' rhetoric that a climate of stress and anxiety is produced. Faced with the expectations for them to be competent in both their studies and in their CCAs, students are constantly stressed by the multiple demands. As the captions show, the stress is also accompanied by a sense of fear and inadequacy, as students are afraid of not being able to achieve what is expected of them.

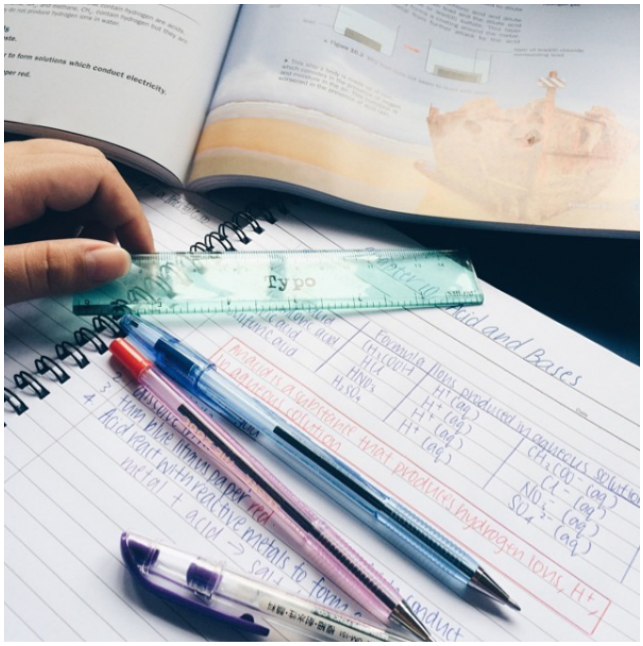


TO

[redacted] late night homework after a long day . so annoyed with them . I just want to sleep . the amount of time I have most for sleep is just so little . by the time I reach home after school activities and ccas ; I still have homework and assignments to do . it's driving me insane . There's also tests coming up but I don't even know anything. I wish I had more time for sleep because if I could choose not to attend school now to have a stress free life . I would ,

5 weeks ago

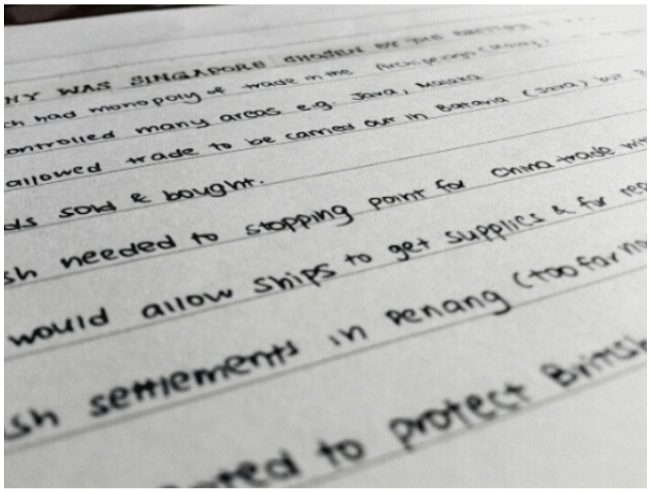
Plate 7.



TO

[redacted] Life now is nothing but studying. Waking up early in the morning and sleeping late because im trying my ultimate best to understand my weakest subject (sci and amath). Im sure these subjects are easy but im making it difficult because im not putting enough effort. O lvl mt was over and it was horrible. I didn't want to have that horrible feeling ever again. I need to work hard, i HAVE to work hard.

Plate 8.



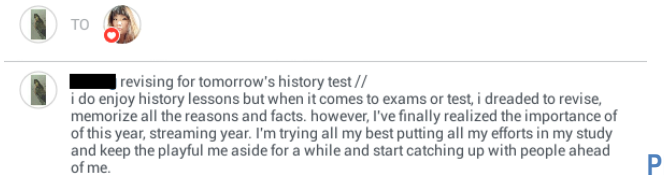


Plate 9.

Plates 7-9: Series of photos submitted by different students reflecting on their stressful schooling lives.

However, this climate of stress and anxiety is not solely a by-product produced by the state (by means of crafting manifestos and curriculum) and experienced by the students. As we know by now, emotions are relational and "they involve (re)actions or relations" (Ahmed, 2014). Teachers are part of this economy of circulation whereby a climate of stress is maintained. During my fieldwork, many teachers revealed that to ensure there is 'holistic learning", they have to take up various roles beyond ensuring that students achieve their academic goals. Other duties involve planning for overseas and field trips, overseeing the CCAs[4], maintaining discipline, and for some teachers, contributing to 'staff development' programmes. In particular, the stress experienced by the teachers come from *knowing* that 'holistic education' is an ideal that is impossible to achieve and yet, seen as a *necessity* to fulfil the demands of the economy and

[4] 'CCA' refers to Co-Curricular Activities

society. For example, when asked about what he thinks is the purpose of education in Singapore, Jason, a geography teacher replies:

> "I think for our society it is also very pragmatic right… the government feel that this is the best way to, sort of educate the younger generation… through their own merit- meritocracy…they can fit into the roles better […] be it a worker, or be it someone who have bigger role to play in the society" (personal interview, 2014).

Yet, Jason feels frustrated and overwhelmed by the demands of the system:

> "[…] There are always things that happen at the last minute that I don't always like… sometimes in these kinds of organisation, I can understand, but doesn't mean I like it. I guess there are a lot of conflicting things that are being promoted… things like 'every school is a good school'… they push forward things like innovation, creativity, holistic education, but maybe at the ground level, we are still doing a lot of drilling, because the basic examination system has not changed"

Both teachers and students experience stress because they are caught up within the state's project of producing the ideal citizen-worker. Students, are expected to embody the ideal notion of a well-rounded, holistic individual, whilst the teachers are expected to be the custodians who ensure that the students achieve these goals. Strikingly the stress does not come from the teachers' and students' inability to cope. Rather, the stress comes from them being *on the verge* of being unable to cope. As seen from Natasha and Cui Fen's photo captions, they wrote that they must continue to work hard despite the stress. Similarly, Sabirah, a teacher with 14 years of experience also justify how she feels frustrated with her demanding workload, yet because the staff in school seem to be "coping" with the stress, she deems the current system adequate enough:

> "there is something not right about our structure, our system [pause] but then again, whatever that is not right is still surviving, we are all coping [laughs]… for every (school) activity that we stop, we start something new… I understand yeah you know like developing, fine-

> tuning our programmes… but I just think that one thing that needs to stop is having new programmes… just remain status-quo and you know, *let all of us cope with the current one*… I think we need to stop having things- stop having big wonderful things that looks good on paper or things that can only happen in a very ideal situation" (personal interview, 2014, my emphasis).

From the examples above, we can see how the emotional climate of feeling stressed is maintained precisely because the students and teachers are coping with it just enough. According to Isin, this maintenance and constant production of anxiety is what makes the neurotic citizen tick. Importantly he highlights that this is only the first step from crafting the neurotic subject into the neurotic citizen (he argues that the neurotic subject is being produced by making them to be in a state of anxiety. To become a neurotic citizen, the subject has to respond to calls to adjust its conduct to address his/her anxious state). In the next section, I am going to look at how the state of anxiety and stress experienced by the students and staff provides an opportunity for various power apparatus to work on them to cultivate socially acceptable values and habits so as to transform them into docile citizens.

5.2.3 "Education is really not about paper-chasing": Emotional Learning, Values Education, and Habitus

> "Education is really not about paper-chasing. It's about what you do with the knowledge you have, whether you turn out to be a better citizen-human…(or) I must say- human." (Sabirah, personal interview, 2014).

In the interview quote above, Sabirah expresses that to her, education is about learning how to be *someone better*. This sentiment is not unique, as most teachers told me during the interviews that they think the ultimate aim of education is to help students become 'someone good'. In this section, I look at how values education in the CCE syllabus, as well as the 'core values' that are emphasised in different school environments act as a form of intervention to turn students into "good individuals and

useful citizens" (MOE, 2014). I contend that this form of intervention is targeted at the existing insecurities of students, and at the same time aim to produce forms of 'positive' affective relations between the students and their learning environments by cultivating certain habitus. I also argue that the creation of such habitus takes place in a myriad of spaces both within and outside schools.

As I have shown in Chapter 3, the CCE syllabus is centered on 'core values', such as respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care, as well as harmony. However, how does a focus on these 'core values' help to develop students into the "good individuals and useful citizens" that the policy papers are so keen on talking about? In the previous section, I demonstrated how this notion of "good individuals and useful citizens" is underpinned by the rhetoric of 'holistic education', whereby students are expected to be competent in a slew of academic and non-academic competencies. As the figure of a 'holistic learner' is more of an ideal than an achievable reality, a climate of stress and anxiety is produced amongst the students as they scramble to cope with the demands to achieve this goal. Thus, values education can be seen as a form of technology targeting the sense of inadequacy amongst the teachers and students in order to transform them into governable subjects. In fact, values education can be seen as a panacea to solve what the student is *lacking*. The quote by Aishah, a teacher and CCE coordinator demonstrates how values education is an important 'solution' to the current social problems (in which those problems are embodied by the students):

> "Teaching is about moulding a person, not only academically, but (also in) character… because I think our youngsters they do not have that knowledge… as an EDUCATOR that is our purpose. So that, for me … when they leave the school, they will not only learn academically…but what they have learnt from the teacher- *the values,*

> *the character learning*… that is the most important part… I like the new initiatives (rolled out by the ministry)… the 'balancing', values-driven, student-centric…" (Aishah, personal interview, 2014, my emphasis).

In the quote above, Aishah expresses how she thinks that values education is important because it is about *shaping* individuals. If we read her quote in light of what has been established in the previous section, we can see that the (perceived) end-point in "moulding a person" is for students to grow up to be the 'holistic' individuals envisioned by the state. This notion of 'imparting values' to the student is a common theme throughout my whole fieldwork, where teachers often shared with me how they think values and character education is the building-block of schooling.

One of the ways in which values are 'inculcated' in schools is through a programme called "Values in Action" (VIA). As part of the CCE curriculum, VIA programmes involve camps, overseas trips, and community involvement projects. Although most of the VIA programmes are conducted outside the classroom or even school, some of the programmes such as local community involvement projects, are tied to CCE lessons:

> "Values in Action (VIA) are *learning experiences* that support students' development as socially responsible citizens who contribute meaningfully to the community, through the learning and *application of values*, knowledge and skills. VIA fosters student ownership over how they contribute to the community. As part of VIA, students reflect on their experience, the values they have put into *practice*, and how they can continue to contribute meaningfully" (MOE, 2014, my emphasis).

It is critical to note that many VIA trips are held outside the physical space of the school. Although the most common venues are local campsites, it is also increasingly common for students to go on overseas service learning or cultural immersion trips outside of Singapore, in a bid for students to be 'global citizens' and to forge global

connections. Just as Kraftl (2013) shows in his book that alternative education practices and spaces are more varied than ever, the case of Singapore shows that state's goal of producing innovative workers who can contribute to the country's economic competitiveness has redefined 'learning spaces', making them more diverse than ever. It is in my opinion that these diverse learning spaces in which VIA trips are conducted plays important roles in shaping the subjectivities of students through conditioning them to take up certain bodily habits.

Here, Bourdieu's concept of habitus is helpful in deconstructing how VIA works to govern student bodies. According to Bourdieu, habitus is defined as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions (that are) objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules" (1990:53). What he means by this is that our entire embodied history and bodily practices (or bodily habits) are actually sites where power is enacted. For example, the ways in which we comport our bodies- how we walk, look, or even eat are not organic, but actually socially scripted. More importantly, these bodily dispositions are acquired through our experiences of everyday life, without explicit interference telling us to do so. Hence, VIA can be seen as a form of technology to shape students' habitus through creating learning experiences for the students so that they can *embody and perform* various values, instead of just knowing what the values means. For instance, the photo reflection by Alicia, a secondary three student highlights how various values such as "patience" and "teamwork" are 'taught' during a VIA trip held in Malaysia **[plate 10]**.

Plate 10: Alicia's recount of her camp experience.

It is important to note that the students did not 'know' at that time that they were learning how to be patient or how to work in a team during the camp. Rather, it was in hindsight that they realised what was the 'learning point' they garnered after the camp has ended. For example, during the interview, Alicia shared with me how she did not feel that good during the camp. It was after a series of events that led her to realise after the camp that she has actually learnt important 'values':

> "during that trip we were grouped into groups of three or four, and I was grouped with two of the girls that I wasn't really close with and especially one of them, I didn't really like her… like I just don't like to be grouped with them and stuff so I was like 'whoa cher[5*] can I change group?' and she's like 'no no no, you are the group leader' […] I think I

5 Singaporean colloquial: Teacher.

> would have hated the camp if the class didn't have fun or something… and also like the campfire was really amazing. At first the class didn't really want to cooperate… so for the first two days I was damn worried like what if our class doesn't cooperate… but then suddenly when we go up for our performance, everyone really- even our instructor- he went "they are the best performers, you guys are going to be so amazed by it!" and we felt really encouraged, then that's why the teachers and instructors really feel that it is the best performance because it's a team spirit thing […]" (personal interview, 2014).

Alicia's recount of the camp, as well as her reflection of what she learned shows that values education is an "unconscious framework" (Holt, 2008:235) that works through the students' *habitus, encounters and experiences* forged during the VIA trip. As already established previously, the identities of the students are always maintained in a state of inadequacy (because they can never be the perfect 'holistic' individual), and this state of inadequacy is experienced based on their emotional stress and the feeling of desire. The VIA programme hence works on such emotions to exhort students to work towards being a better individual by learning (or rather, obtaining and embodying) those values. In the words of Zembylas, "habitus may constitute a site of transformative emotion practices" (2007:448). The camp provides an opportunity for Alicia to learn about the values through feeling the need to be a better person. Being conducted outside the space of the school where the students' movements and everyday encounters are scripted to a certain extent due to the ways in which school activities are structured, the campsite is an environment which is capable of generating new emotional states to prime her to fully embody and perform the values. As apparent from Alicia's camp experience, she has forged various affective connections with her class, through having fun with them and bonding with them. In return, these positive emotions 'rubbed off on her', and she becomes predisposed to act in a certain way (of leading the class and being patient with them).

Although the VIA programme provides an important insight into which bodies are governed by values, it is not the only form of technology that is in place to craft students into the ideal citizen-worker. Stephen, a senior teacher mentioned: "It's not that I explicitly teach… (about values and character during) lessons at CCE, but its because of your CCA, your SL (student leadership), little things like that… so CCE/SEL is incremental education" (personal interview, 2014). Because habitus is "acquired via less-than-conscious embodied practices" (Holt, 2008:223), the values have to be reinforced through the different aspects of schooling. For example, the school created a 'catch me doing right' award to be given out to students weekly during their year talk. The idea is that students must embody the values in their day-to-day lives in school, and perform them (and indeed, get 'caught' by teachers who are surveilling them!). By being awarded during their level assembly in front of their peers, a positive affect of pride and personal happiness is generated. Through this spectacle, the student is encouraged to continually embody and perform the 'right values', and the other students watching the award ceremony are also incited into doing the same. This is an example of the Foucauldian notion of 'technologies of the self', which can be described as techniques that "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1988:19). More importantly, this technologies of the self is conditioned by the production of emotions such as pride and happiness.

However, even though the discussion has been largely impinged on the *insidious* ways in which students and teachers are governed, it does not mean that the

'traditional' way (in the Foucauldian sense) of governing bodies by punishment is absent. Although contemporary theorists of governmentality and subjectivity often focus on the "guidance of selves" (Rose, 1998), it is important to note that more often than not, multiple modes of governmentality operate together. One such example is the disciplinary system that all Singapore schools have in place. During my fieldwork, I learnt that values education are not only realised through specific programmes, but also through school rules which map out the expected conducts that students have to embody on their day-to-day school life. For instance, each student is given a student guidebook, where a 'code of conduct' is presented. The code comprises of a list of expected behaviors and rules that the students needs to abide by in various categories, such as school attendance, appearance, and conduct within and outside school premises. Although it is stated that the main aim for this student management framework is to "teach students to manage their own behaviours, rather than relying on external controls", it is also stated that "when students make wrong choices, the school will instill discipline and guide them to make responsible decision the next time". This is done through what the school calls "corrective actions/consequences" ranging from counseling or warning, to detention, to school suspension, or even public caning and police involvement. This disciplinary regime involves the instillation of fear into the entire process of subject-making. Although the majority of the students might not even get punished, it is this fear- the possibility of being punished, that steers them away from wrong-doings and to further condition them to embody the values.

5.3 Conclusion

In Chapter 3, I established the relationship between the SEL framework, CCE syllabus, as well as neo-liberalism and nation-building. In this chapter, I raised the

puzzling disjuncture between how the Ministry of Education seems to highlight the importance of emotional competencies in the education system, vis-à-vis the seeming absence of the impartation of emotional knowledge. By using Isin's concept of the neurotic citizen, I have suggested that the invisibility of emotions as an explicit form of knowledge meant for the consumption of the masses is crucial for crafting new type of subjectivities in the educational landscape, where the bodies of subjects are calibrated by marshalling emotional energies. I highlighted that emotional education can be delivered in ways other than imparting emotional knowledge explicitly in the classrooms. What is paramount to this chapter are the ways in which the concept of governmentality as applied to the education landscape is re-conceptualised. Indeed, "schools are not self-contained spaces" (Collins and Coleman, 2008:295). Although schools are affective sites capable of generating emotional states amongst the teachers and students, they are not the only sites involved. By eliciting various examples and studying the inter-relation between emotional learning, values education, as well as habitus, I gesture towards the idea that we need to conceive how emotional governmentality can take place across a variegated set of sites both within and beyond the conventional space of the school. Finally, it is worth noting that global discourses surrounding education often revolve around the notion of 'investment', where young people are seen as resources for future labour-market participation or civil participation (Kjørholt, 2013). The basis of crafting the 'holistic learner' is primed towards creating not only governable bodies now, but governing those bodies so that they can be useful in *the future*. This signals the importance of looking at the social and political consequences of such forms of governmentality. In the next chapter, I will explore how emotions serve as tactics in the sphere of education. By doing so, I hope

to look at how emotional practices might create new forms of innovative sites for the subjects to rework and negotiate within the power regime.

6. Tactical Manoeuvres: Emotional Labour, Performativity and Slippages

6.1 Introduction

Reflections from the Field: In between Two Classrooms

I had just finished a classroom observation in a secondary one class, and was on my way to the next class. Amongst the students meandering along the corridor, I spotted a few familiar faces. They belonged to the class I was going to observe. I zigzagged between sweaty bodies but almost collided with Zakir, one of the research participants. Zakir was eating a sandwich. He looked at me in the eye with a serious gaze, and put a finger on his lips, gesturing to me not to comment on his behaviour. Students are not supposed to consume food outside the cafeteria and canteen, but it is an open secret that students do so all the time behind the teacher's back.

I walked into the classroom and took my usual seat at the back of the class while students streamed in. By that time the bell had rang for a while, but some students were still milling in and out of the classroom, while others were stood around idly, talking to one another. It seemed as if they were having a serious discussion. An uneasy air filled the room. While I was still feeling bewildered by the unusual atmosphere, the form teacher finally took her belated entrance. Her expression was stern and sombre. As if sensing that they were in trouble, the students streamed back to their seats quickly. During the previous class, a trainee teacher had failed to turn up. A few students decided to take the opportunity to escape the class. Some boys who took the liberty to go to the canteen were caught by a subject teacher.

What was meant to be a CCE lesson became a disciplinary session where the form teacher reprimanded not only the students who went out, but also the class

chairman and prefects who did not stop their friends from leaving. Since none of the students stood up to take responsibility for the incident, the teacher declared that she would hand out demerit points to the entire class. She explained that she arrived at this decision because the incident was a result of individuals being unable to work together and do the right thing. As soon as she announced her decision, voices of indignation echoed through the class. I sensed the students' anger. In protest, a few students challenged the teacher's decision. Amongst them was Zakir (although he left the class to get food, he did not get caught). Usually the resident joker in class, Zakir's tone was starkly different from his usual taunts and gibes. He apologised on behalf of the class and suggested that only those caught in the act were given the demerit points. He reasoned that the incident was an isolated case, and promised on behalf of the class that it will not happen again. The class collectively supported Zakir's argument, and the teacher relented…

Excerpt 2: Fieldnotes from the Author.

The vignette **[Excerpt 2]** illustrates the multifarious and messy nature of embodied emotions. It also highlights how the school is a landscape coloured by hues of different emotions. In a discussion about collective feelings, Ahmed highlights that emotions are "bound up with how we inhabit the world 'with' others" (2004:28). To study a community and what makes it a collective is also about studying the "emergence of 'feelings-in-common'" (2004:27). Ahmed postulates that these 'feelings-in-common' can be studied by an analysis of the "impressions" left by bodily others-- by thinking and reflecting about what *moves us*, what makes us *feel*, and what emotions inhabit certain *places*. In the vignette above, my fleeting encounters with the students along the corridor, as well as my intense experience of sitting in that particular CCE class

serves as a detour for us to think about the production, consumption, and circulation of emotions in Singapore's education landscape. This detour is important for "locating emotions" (Bondi et.al, 2005:4) beyond what is orchestrated by the state. The myriad of emotions that I experienced throughout my short journey between two classrooms provides evidence of the complex production of emotions in schools which would not be gleaned if we solely study policies surrounding emotional learning, or merely look at 'official' school events (such as CCE classes). The vignette demonstrates how Zakir, his classmates, and the teacher participated in an emotional exchange to compromise on an outcome that both parties were satisfied with. This shows that emotions are not only political tools co-opted by the state to govern its population, but can also be appropriated by individuals.

The vignette teases out the importance of paying attention to the *routes and flows* of emotions, which shape the everyday experiences of schooling. This chapter will centre on the malleability of emotion, and the ways in which it flows through objects and spaces. In particular, I study how the fluidity of emotion serves as an entry point for us to look at the ways in which teachers and students are agentic actors capable of negotiating hegemonic rules in the emotional economy. Much has been discussed in the previous chapter about how emotions are utilised as a form of governance in the education landscape. I posited that in the context of Singapore, 'emotional learning' targets the inadequacies of students and teachers so as to condition them to work towards the ideal of being an 'holistic' individual. However, it is important to note that this focus of creating an 'holistic' individual to fulfil the needs of the future economy suggests that young people are treated as 'useful' citizens only *if* they achieve the goals set out for them in the future. In Skelton's words, they are treated as adults "in-

waiting" (2010:146). Similarly, by simply analysing the process of subject-production to shape young Singaporeans into the ideal citizen-worker of the future, we foreclose studying how young people can be agentic actors capable of negotiating hegemonic rules.

In this chapter, I argue that in the process of nurturing students to become 'good citizens' and 'good workers', a series of subversions are taking place. I posit that these subversions are only possible due to the fluid nature of emotions, where hegemonic production of emotions can be challenged by the subjects' own emotional practices. I lay out three forms of emotional subversions. In the first section, I look at how the bodies of teachers are political sites where empowerment can take place. Using the concept of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; McDowell, 2009), I explore how teachers employ emotions strategically to carry out their work. Eliciting examples of how teachers carry out discipline work and the ways in which they deliver CCE lessons, I demonstrate that teachers actively make use of their spontaneous emotions, or in some cases enhance or suppress certain emotions in order to gain authority, respect, or even seek empathy amongst the students. This provides a counter-perspective to Hochschild's and McDowell's theorisations of emotional labour, which conceptualise it as a suppressive process where bodies are commoditised.

In the second section, I situate the notion of subversion within the social geographies of students. I argue that the notion of performance is central to helping us look at the myriad of emotions that circulates the education landscape. Using Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, I study how students use emotional tactics to manipulate the feelings of their friends and teachers so as to achieve their own intended outcomes. Here, I propose that it is important to look at schools as not only

institutionalised spaces, but also performative spaces where the subject positions of teachers and students are constantly negotiated. Finally, I look at subversion in terms of Butler's notion of 'slippages'. By relating case studies of students and teachers displaying emotions spontaneously, I show that as emotions are relational and fluid, there is always potential for bodies to apprehend and relate to emotions in different ways. I explore how the spontaneity of emotions offers the possibilities of re-doing politics and reproducing spaces.

6.2 The Story of the Snake: Emotional Labour and Teachers' Work

In her widely cited book, Arlie Hochschild (1983) puts forward the thesis that the birth of the tertiary and service industries has given rise to new forms of estrangement and alienation in the workplace. She argues that workers in the service industry are not only carrying out physical labour, but also emotional labour so as to satisfy the demands of customers and bosses. In Hochschild's opinion, emotions are objects that are commodified in the workplace for the sake of commercial profits. She uses the term 'emotional labour' to describe how workers "induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain… outward countenance" (1983:7). In Linda McDowell's work, she highlights that these insights on the commodification of bodies (and emotions) are important for us to study the new geographies of labour and workplaces. In her words:

> "workers in many of the most intimate forms of embodied work are assembled across a broad spatial canvas, sometimes on a global scale, although in ways that particular systems of national and local regulation influence… The intersection of spatial processes at different scales produces in local labour markets the *specificities of particular types of work and workplaces*" (2009:15, emphasis mine).

As a profession that is premised upon serving the intellectual and emotional needs of children and young people, teaching is undoubtedly a form of emotional labour. I

have explored in the previous chapters how education in Singapore is linked to the global economy. Hence, it is pertinent for us to study how such "interactive embodiment" (McDowell, 2009:10) in school is restructuring social relations and also education spaces. The remainder of this section will employ emotional labour as a lens to interrogate how teachers respond to the demands of their job. By engaging with Hochschild and McDowell's works, I demonstrate that teachers are not just inert bodies for the institution to decide what emotions they could feel and showcase, but are active agents who often make use of emotions *intentionally* to advance care towards their students, as well as improvise their lessons and in the midst of it, challenge the dominant values laid out by the curriculum.

At first glance, the site of the school might be an unconventional space to situate emotional labour, as the notion of emotional labour is often synonymous with a form of labour that denies the agency of the worker, and hence more applicable to 'lower level' jobs. Indeed, in the words of McDowell, "in embodied interactive forms of work… the closer the contact is between the bodies of service providers and service purchasers, the lower the status of the work" (2009:49). Although much has been theorised in the academia surrounding emotional labour and workers' bodies and emotions, the scholarship has the tendency to focus on how selected marginalised groups, such as women, migrant workers, and sex workers are implicated by emotional labour (McDowell, 2009; Hochschild, 1983; Dyer et al 2008; Hoang, 2011). Furthermore, studies are also mainly devoted to studying what are considered 'marginal spaces' outside the typical workspaces such as firms and offices. As teaching is considered as a highly cerebral job where the main skill of teachers is imparting knowledge to students, the notion of emotional labour is seemingly inapplicable to teaching.

On the contrary, teaching is a highly interactive job where 'body work' is central to the service exchange between teachers and students, and the school is a dynamic site shaped by bodily practices. Throughout my fieldwork, many teachers pointed out to me that it is important to regulate their own feelings in front of the students, especially when it comes to disciplining them. Sabhya, the head of discipline of the school, related a story to me to illustrate how he manages his own emotions when he goes about carrying out disciplining work (such as counselling, scolding, or even caning students who committed serious offences such as truancy, theft, or fighting):

> "Ok, I tell you a story. There was a snake. So a religious teacher… said (to the snake) 'you should not bite people, it is very sinful'. So the snake stopped biting. After the people saw the snake (who stopped biting), they think: this snake stopped biting. So they took the stick and beat the snake. The snake kept quiet. Then another day, the religious teacher walked past and said to the snake 'why are you so injured?' The snake said, 'you asked me not to bite', and the religious teacher said, 'I asked you not to bite, but not *not* to hiss!'" (Personal interview, 2014).

Using the metaphor of the snake, the message that Sabhya is trying to convey through the story is that the act of disciplining students requires one to manage both his/her spontaneous *inner emotions*, as well as his/her *outward portrayal of emotions*. In other words, when carrying out disciplinary work, teachers need to appear tough outwardly, yet manage their own 'authentic' feelings so they will not feel spiteful towards them. Adding on, Sabhya mentions that when he is disciplining the students, "deep inside (I) don't feel any anger or ill-will. Inside, (I) will be laughing…but outside, eyes all big- scolding the hell out of them (the students). But inside (I) will be calm". This shows that a teacher's job requires a high level of "emotional management" (Hochschild, 1983:49), whereby one has to train oneself not to be truly angry towards his/her student, yet display some form of anger on the outside so as to disseminate a

certain message. The work of disciplining students is therefore a form of emotional labour because it requires a detachment's of one's inner self from one's outer self, in order to perform a job. In Hochschild's theory, emotional management involves the institution setting up the 'front stage' to calibrate the worker's feeling in the workplace so that s/he can in turn shape the customer's feelings. Seen this way, schools are 'stages' where teachers manage their own emotions so as to reinforce certain institutional rules (and recalling the previous chapter, help to fulfil the institutional goals of producing successful individuals for the neoliberal economy).

This conceptualisation of emotional labour and emotional management in the workplace negates any form of agency that the teachers might have, as Horchschild argues that even the 'authentic' or spontaneous 'inner' feelings experienced by the workers needs to be managed by the institution. In a like manner, although McDowell acknowledges that emotional work requires "intense interpersonal relationships and emotional attachments to objects of care" (2009:94), her discussions of embodied and emotional work in the book "Working Bodies" are mostly in terms of care work at home or other workplaces (as nannies or housekeeprers). Her work also places primacy on the exchange of emotions for wages, and views such emotional exchange as mostly discriminatory. However, not all aspects of waged emotional exchange are degrading to workers. The teachers' emotional labour can very well help to facilitate their work. For example in Sabhya's case, knowing how to manage and manipulate emotions helps him to gain respect from his students and reinforces his authority.

In order to have a more nuanced theorisation of emotional labour in the context of schools, we need to treat the classrooms as affectively charged sites where both the teachers' and students' subjectivities are going through ongoing configurations

(Watkins, 2011). One way to look at how teachers exercise their own emotional agency is by looking at the ways in which the SEL curriculum is carried out in CCE classes. In Isenberger and Zembylas' research, they suggest that emotional labour involved in caring teaching can render positive effects on both the students and the teachers, and "teachers can and do enjoy their emotional work as carers even if they have to display ingenuine positive emotions" (2006:124). During my fieldwork, I discovered that teachers will make use of emotions in order to convey certain messages in class and to connect emotionally with the students. In my interviews, some CCE teachers revealed to me that they do not usually follow the lesson plans given by the ministry or their CCE coordinators in full. For instance, Vidya shared about how she improvises her lessons:

> "although the … lesson plans given to us by MOE is quite detailed and standard, for my secondary 3 (classes), I will tend to tweak it a little- especially if the prompting questions are a little bit sensitive (for example): 'how do you spend time with your family?'. It may be a very general question, but maybe to the student… he doesn't even have a family? Yeah I have students who only have single parent, no siblings, nobody else… so these are things that we can do to make sure we don't ostracise someone…" (personal interview, 2014).

In his study of sex education in Singapore, Liew highlights "the official curriculum is itself subject to the pedagogical agency of teachers, whose actions in the classroom might in turn 'tactically' subvert the intentions of the state" (2014:9). Indeed, as I have mentioned, the CCE curriculum is structured to impart dominant social values to the students. For instance, the examples that were given in the lesson about sexual education were catered for heterosexual individuals. For the lesson on family values which I attended, the emphasis was on building strong family bonds. All the examples that were given in class, as well as prompting questions for the students to reflect during that lesson was based on the assumption that a heteronormative, nuclear family

is the ideal family type that every student already has, or should have. However, this is obviously not the case. By tweaking the lesson plan, Vidya is not only acknowledging that the knowledge that the ministry is trying to impart is a hegemonic ideal that does not reflect the societal realities, but she is also preventing students from feeling left out in school (and in the society). It is important to note that Vidya's improvisations are prompted by her feelings of care towards the students. This, again, can be seen as a form of emotional labour, and highlights how lessons in schools can be constitutive of (otherwise unnoticed) emotional transactions between different bodies.

Indeed, in the words of Lawson, "we need to take seriously the ways in which social relations are produced through emotion and the ways in which emotional connections are also sites of power" (2008:5). Looking at how emotional labour is carried out by the teachers prompts us to also look at how bodily politics are imbricated within larger scale policies (which produce the curriculum). Unlike Hochschild's (1983) example of the air-stewardess whose emotional investment in her work is a sign of her being subjected to the control of her employer, the stories related by the teachers demonstrates that emotional labour can be enacted not simply because the teachers were made to. In fact, emotional labour provides a lens to show us the dynamic ways in which emotions are controlled, negotiated, and enacted in a teacher's life.

6.3 "Being Stupid in a Very Smart Way": Performing Emotions and Subverting Rules

In this section, I will explore how the concepts of performance and performativity can be helpful in studying the ways in which students make use of emotions to negotiate the authoritative structures of schooling. I will also look at the relationship between bodily performances and emotional relations in the education landscape. In

her books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler uses performance and performativity to look at how sex, gender, and sexuality are relations constructed through the iteration of social norms. In her words, "gender is not a fact, the *various acts of gender* create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there will be no gender at all" (1990:178, emphasis mine). For Butler, performativity is the enactment of gender, which is enforced through normative devices. Thus, performativity is the doing of discourse. Butler presents two main ways of subversion to disrupt such regulations[6]. The first one is what she terms "slippages" (1993:82), which I take to be the *unconscious and unintentional* disruption of the iterative acts of gender (in cases where the acts of gender is exceeded or not accomplished), and the second one is the *conscious and intentional disruption* of acts of gender by means of imitative *performances* or parodies (here she gives the examples of drag, where men wear 'women's clothes' to perform femininity to illustrate this).

What does Butler's notion of performativity have to do with emotions and education? Recalling the previous chapter, I argued that the Values in Action (VIA) programmes in school seek to script students' habitus by operating on their emotions. I also put forth how dominant social values are inscripted onto the bodies of the students through the VIA programmes by cultivating their bodily habits. My interpretation of Bourdieu's notion of the habitus thus relates to Butler's account of performativity, in the

6 There has been an ongoing debate in the academia about Butler's conceptualisation of subversion (see: Nelson, 1999; Huey and Berndt, 2008; Gregson and Rose, 2000). While some authors argued that Butler's theorisation of 'slippages' negates the subject's agency and intentionality in the doing of identity (Nelson, 1999), others acknowledge Butler's later revision of her thesis to reconsider the intentionality of her subject (that is, going beyond the notion of 'slippages' to consider how political performances can subvert scripted behaviours). As this dissertation will show, I am more inclined to follow Butler's later position on the possibility that both slippages and performance are acts of subversion. Hence I follow Gregson and Rose's definition of performance and performativity: the authors (following Goffman and Butler) defines performance as "what individual subjects do, say, (and) 'act-out'" (2000:434), and performativity as "the citational practices which reproduce and/or subvert discourse which enable and discipline subjects and their performers".

sense that the doing of dominant social values cannot exist outside the power/discourse matrices, and are necessarily *embodied*. The workings of the state's power are performative, and actualised by emotions. Butler's theory thus presents opportunities for us to look at how such habitus might be disrupted. More importantly, by looking at how citational practices conditioned by dominant discourses can be subverted, we are enabled to conceptualise educational spaces in a more relational manner. As Gregson and Rose argue, spaces are not just articulations of power, but are "performative of power relations" (2000:441). What they mean by this is that spaces *come into being* by specific social actors carrying out specific performances, whether it is the iteration of dominant social scripts, or subversions of those scripts. Therefore, by looking at how students perform subversions, we can look at schools beyond its normative characteristic as an authoritative landscape.

Previously, I have demonstrated the ways in which the emotional labour of the teachers can involve managing felt emotions and expressed emotions in order to establish authority and gain respect from the students. This shows that to a certain extent, some forms of emotional labour involve the performance of emotions. One might argue that the teachers are able to manipulate emotions only because teachers are considered as adults who already wield authority over the students. Although this might be true on some levels, it is important to note that students also have the ability to negotiate with authority. Take, for example, this conversation during a group interview that I had with four 16 year-old students, Putri, Natasha, Bryan, and Rachael **[Excerpt 3]**:

Clara: In your opinion, what do you think being a student means?

Putri: Study lah

Natasha: Being… I don't know… being stupid in a very smart way…

Clara: What is being stupid in a very smart way?

Natasha: Like… how to say-

Bryan: [cuts in] in front of the teachers we become dumb, but after that-

Natasha: but like for example in situations where you get into trouble, you need to think… the other way round where we need to be…wit

Clara: witty?

Natasha: witty! Yeah…

Rachael: In order to escape all those-

Putri: you must find a way, yeah… don't just stay there… must like plan those escape routes.

Rachael: see, like all the teachers here… some of them, they are really like, how do you describe all our teachers?

Putri: teachers?

Rachael: yeah like some of them are really weird…

Clara: So you told me that being a student means being witty and that you must know how to negotiate…

All: Yeah!

Clara: So what do you think being a young person means?

Natasha: we need to boot-lick… because I believe when you boot-lick, you will get advantages…

Putri: applies like… you must be smart in some ways… must be street smart

Rachael: not study smart, you must like… lie correctly.

Clara: What is lying correctly?

Natasha: Like you need to come out with stories that are believable lah!

Bryan: Foolproof…. (stories) that are foolproof…

Rachael: Like when you tell a lie, you cannot be stupid, cannot be (too) obvious…

Excerpt 3: Group conversation with secondary 3 students.

In Holloway and Valentine's work, they emphasise that scholars need to challenge the assumptions that children and young people are "little 'angels', who are born good and innocent of adult ways" (2000:3). As the conversation above illustrates, young people are not only capable of being scheming, but also adept in making use of the society's expectations of them being incapable of deceit so as to get their way around things (in Natasha's words, they are able to make use of their identities as young people to be "stupid in a very smart way" because the society's expectations of young people is to be ignorant at some levels). Young people are far from being innocent, ignorant, and powerless. The students' use of the adjectives 'witty' and 'boot-licking' to describe what being a student and young person means to them demonstrates that challenging and negotiating with social rules are part and parcel of their everyday lives in school. But how do students "come out with stories that are believable"? What do they mean by "escape routes" and being smart by "lying correctly"?

One of the ways that students negotiate with authority involves performing emotions. Revisiting the vignette presented in the beginning of this chapter, we recall that Zakir helped his classmates to escape punishment by speaking out for them and expressing remorse. It is also interesting to know that in class, all the students displayed some extent of guilt and fear to the teacher, by pleading with her. However, when I spoke to some of the students from the class a few hours after the incident, it was clear that their guilt was certainly up-played. Indeed, when I interviewed Zakir, he revealed to me that it was not the first time he went to the café to get food during lesson times when he felt bored. In a cheeky tone, he said to me:

> "I am the fattest person and I didn't get caught…then Ray got caught by Mr Teo… its like stupid… if you see a teacher, then (just say) 'HI TEACHER!' and if the teacher ask 'where you going?!', you reply 'TOILET. BYE TEACHER' then you turn back…I am also an excessive liar […] oh shit [whispers] I almost got into a disciplinary case (on another occasion), but I lie my way out… that's why it is good to be very clean… I never do anything (drastically bad), like missing in action or anything, then I'll be considered as an ok person although my reputation is a little bit naughty… yeah that's what Miss Amanda (the level head) said: 'you are just a naughty person but you don't do these kinds of bad things'….I replied 'yeah I know I didn't … it was an accident and my friend took my food so I really apologise so I am really sorry I promise it won't happen again' [at this juncture, Zakir acted out his conversation with Miss Amanda, demonstrating how he looked and acted sorry in front of her]. Yeah, I am actually a drama kid, I can handle it really well, so yeah… But my lying skills seriously damn zhun[7], I can lie until … it is fun… when you can lie right, it just makes your life more interesting" (personal interview, 2014).

In the last chapter, I discussed how the CCE syllabus is largely focused on the channelling of emotional energies towards the cultivation of dominant values. For the students, their subject positions (of being a student studying in Singapore and being a young person) are constituted through their performativities. In the words of Gregson and Rose, "performances are at all times interrelational between different subjects… they are saturated with power, bound up within and enmeshed within in very complex ways, the already-established knowledges which they cite" (2000:445). Performativity and performances thus open up the possibilities to think about how subjectivities in the education landscape are shaped and constructed. At the same time, they can also help us look at how power-relations are contested. From the examples that I have shown, it is clear that students do not consume the knowledge that they were taught in class in their entirety. In fact, from the CCE programme and the school's disciplinary

7 Singaporean colloquial with Hokkien roots. The world 'zhun' can be roughly translated to being 'accurate'.

programmes, the students are able to ascertain what is expected of them as students and young people. By knowing what the socially accepted behaviours, gestures, and emotions are, the students can thus re-cite the dominant discourses by *performing the scripts that are expected of* them. Although the re-citation of such discoureses are conditioned by various power apparatus discussed in the previous chapter, subversions of such discourses are also taking place implicitly, as the students are performing the scripts *for their own ends*.

Zakir's account of lying to get out of trouble (which is parallel to what the other students said earlier about being witty) to Miss Amanda shows how lying involves comporting his bodily gestures and facial expression in order to relate to Miss Amanda that he feels remorseful, and is on some level 'innocent'. Here, Zakir make use of emotions in his performance in order to elicit pity from the teacher. Zakir's perfect 'lie' is not constituted by words alone- to lie successfully and the persuade them he needs to 'touch' the teachers by conveying that he is aware of the school rules and is willing to abide by them through his emotional performances. It is important to note that Zakir's performance is not just a one-off show. His performance needs to be maintained throughout his everyday behaviours in school, in order to keep up to his reputation of being a student who is "naughty but not that bad". In a like manner, the students in the group interview consider "being witty" as part of the identity of a student and young person. This shows that performing emotions (and performing to be the student who is willing to comply with school rules) is part of the process of identity construction for the young people. These series of performances thus distort the power-relations between the students and the objects of authority (school rules, school system and the teachers).

Performance, performativity and emotions serve as valuable conceptual tools to help us work with the fluid nature of emotions. This in-turn helps us interrogate the relations between power and space in the education landscape. The notion of performance allow us to look at students' way of knowing and their reactions to the state's dominant discourse of how a young person should be. As mentioned in the previous chapter, students are constantly reminded of what is expected of them during CCE classes and through the other aspects of school. It is thus between the invisible operation of emotions and the conscious knowing and performance of social rules that students like Zakir are able to manipulate the emotional economy by 'engineering' their own sets of emotions. This highlights the performative qualities of the classroom/school spaces. The space of the school is not just an inert site shaped by the power apparatus of the state. Instead, it exists as a dynamic space that is constantly being made and remade through the negotiations between the policies constructed by the state, and the performativities/performances of teachers and students. Lastly, performativity/performance pushes us to conceive of education spaces in creative ways. Indeed, the emotional performances of the students have the potential to create a series of alternative spaces (physical and/or imaginary) that the young people inhere within, where the adults are unable to penetrate. These spaces are produced by the relationality between material spaces (like the stairwells, or the corridors), as well as the social relations of performances between the students (by coming out with stories and 'lying correctly') and the teachers.

6.4 "Every Single Day I am Burning with Jealousy and Hatred": Slippages and Emotions

As Butler explains, the doing of gender involves a series of repetitions that is regulated by discourses. In the previous section, I brought Butler's theory beyond her

conceptualisation of gender, and into the realm of emotional geographies to illustrate how performativity and performance can be actualised by emotionality. I also showed how students disrupt their daily habitus by pretending to adhere to socially approved norms. However, it is important to highlight that not all emotions that are subversive need to be performed *intentionally*. Throughout my fieldwork, I have witnessed and observed many instances whereby the production of emotions which go against dominant scripts are spontaneous and unplanned. Butler calls such disruptions 'slippages' (1993:82). According to her, because discourse produces itself by being iterative, there is no guarantee that the repetitions will be successful. It is when such iterations fail that the constructed nature of social identities are expounded. The rest of this section will be devoted to exploring how the notion of slippages can offer some additional ways of thinking about subversions and agencies in the educational landscape. The nature of this section is in some ways exploratory- as it hopes to initiate conversations about the potential for emotions to (re)shape politics and space in unexpected and spontaneous ways.

To begin, I would like to consider how the Instagram photos that one of the student participants submitted to me during the fieldwork can help us think about the relations between slippages and emotions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I gave the students brief instructions on how they could record their emotional lives. I expected the students to submit the photos that they have taken themselves. However, amongst the submissions, Rachael's photos and captions caught my eye **[Plates 11-15]**. For one, although all the students wrote about how they feel about their school, friendships, as well as teachers, none of them presented their feelings quite as forthrightly as Rachael. Rachael's photos are also different from her friends because she did not submit any

‘original’ pictures. Instead, she uses pictures that she found on the internet to represent her feelings. Some of the pictures are abstract, while the others are more relevant when read in the context of her captions. Yet, all of her submissions have qualities that touched me. The heartfelt recounting of her feelings enabled me to have a glimpse into her emotional struggles that she did not show in her day-to-day life in school, or even during the group interview she did with her friends.

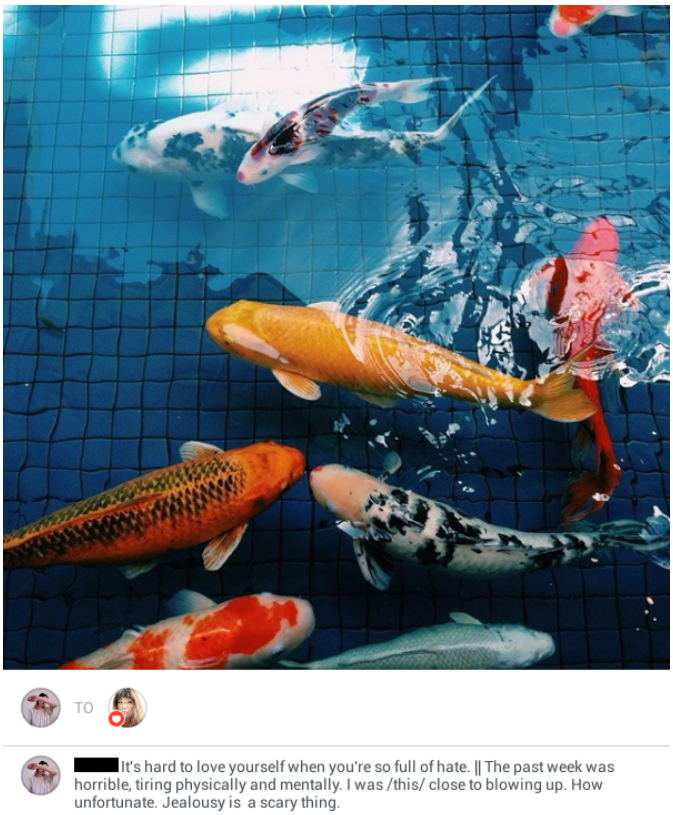


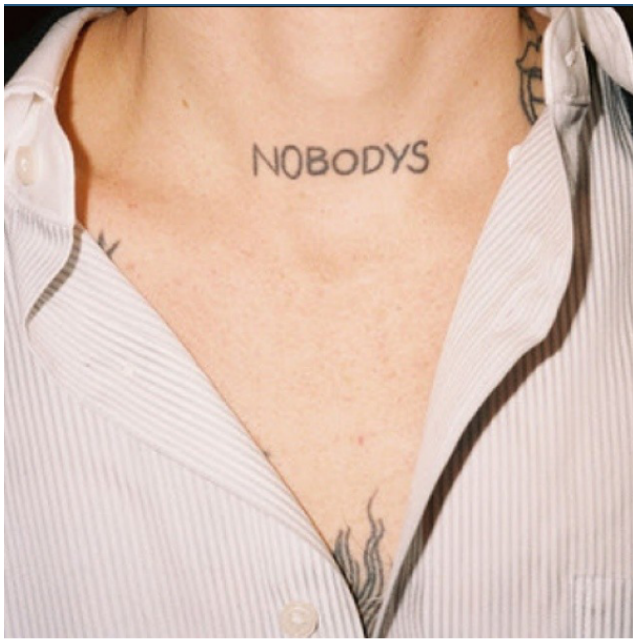
Plate 11.

TO

[redacted] Everything is not good. || Just heard the shittiest news in my life. This sounds super dumb but I just found out that ex-boyfriend cheated on me with my bestfriend for 9 months. Though the r/s ended, it's too hard to swallow. The worst thing was that in the clique that consisted of 4 people (me, my bestfriend, two other girls) the entire clique was aware of what was happening. I was completely kept in the dark. Funny how I was feeling guilty for trying to "overtake" her.

2 weeks ago

Plate 12, previously also shown as plate 4.



TO

[redacted] My problems are trivial compared to the suffering of others experiencing war and hunger, but I still cannot help but feel helpless. || It has come to a point where being first is taking a toll on a friendship that I hold dearly to, and every single day I am burning with jealousy and hatred. Why now? The first half of the year was fine, so why now?

Plate 13.

TO

[redacted] Inferiority || I consider myself inferior, not only in studies, but also in character. I am in a dilemma. I am a complex person. I want to be top, but you cannot be top without being selfish. I do not want to be selfish.

Plate 14.

TO

[redacted] It's hard to feel good about yourself when you're the ugly friend. || For as long as I can remember, I was always the acne-ridden friend. I was always aware about the names being thrown around my back, and how I was always compared to my best friend (The same friend who I am trying outshine in studies) who is better in so many aspects. Complextion... Figure... Character... She has it all. I was always her shadow, tagging along. I've heard it. Guys in my class comparing who's better and I lost terribly because one guy commented on how disgusting acne looked on me. Perhaps this could be the /main/ reason why my jealousy and hatred is seething over the top.

(I don't think this counts as a school problem, but I suppose... I just needed to rant. ^_^|| I've kept this to myself for a good year and a half.)

Plate 15. Plates 11-15: Rachael's Instagram submissions.

Rachael's Instagram pictures serve as a productive point of departure for us to discuss the relations between slippages, emotions, and space. The Instagram photos show how the climate of stress that is generated by the various state apparatus has profound effects on Rachael's social and private life in school. While not all of Rachael's entries depict emotions that are related to coping with the demands of school, most of her captions reveal that her emotional struggles (of being jealous, stressed, inadequate, and frustrated) stems from feeling the need to comply with the expectations of her excelling in terms of "studies" and in "character" **[Plate 14]**. As Ahmed puts it, emotions are "objects which circulate accumulative affective value" (2014:218). The emotions that are engineered and produced by the state are manifested in the material spaces of the school, and Rachael is a subject that is implicated in the emotional economy. Rachael's felt emotions then trickle into cyberspace, and 'spill over' onto the images and captions that Rachael posted. The photographs are objects that have picked up her emotions in the cyberspace. In turn, the images and captions took up the form of those emotions, and became affective mediums which then touched me as a reader.

Reflecting on her photos, it is interesting to note that Rachael's submissions have broken a few unspoken rules about the Instagram project. The rest of the participants and myself assumed that all the photos submitted need to be taken personally by them. Furthermore, the participants had been notified of the possibility of having their photos used for my dissertation or even a public exhibition, so there is a sense that the students were governing themselves not to submit photos and captions that are *too* sensitive or private. Yet, Rachael's photos ignored all these unspoken rules. Rachael's submissions can be seen as a form of slippage which exceeds the set of implicit rules

established by myself and her friends in the project. It is worth noting that she did not break the 'rules' intentionally, rather, her actions are motivated by her need to express her pent-up emotions. As she expressed in one of her photos **[Plate 15]**, she "just needed to rant" because she's kept the feelings to herself for "a good year and a half". The spillage of Rachael's feelings onto her photographs and captions, and in the midst, breaking the rules of the photo project highlights the potential for emotions to travel in unexpected directions, across different spatial scales and across material and non-material spaces. It also points towards the fact that since emotions are 'sticky' (in that they cohere to different bodies and spaces) and can travel in a myriad of unexpected and surprising ways, emotions have the ability to dismantle the everyday temporalities that our bodies are so primed to follow.

This example of the potentialities of emotions and the 'excess' of emotions, which will necessarily spill out of objects to cause disobedience against the rules, can be used as a springboard to look at slippages that are happening in educational spaces. In the beginning of this chapter, I demonstrated how teachers' emotional labour subverts scripted rules unintentionally. Take, for example, Aishah's account of how her tears affected her student:

> "ok I think there was this one time of student being rude. And I think I was just a beginner teacher then… and yeah… it brought tears… but … I think… the tears somehow… I think it's a positive way because that's when the student saw it... I think when I cry, I told the students why I cry, because I felt disappointed, with the attitude all these things, so I … I think the student, *he really felt it and then he regretted*, and then he apologise- then after that right, it SOMEHOW changed his behaviour. So I thought, eh, maybe my tears brought something good. But actually we are not supposed to do that lah. *Because we are supposed to be professionals we're supposed to be strong, you know- with our emotions*" (Aishah, personal interview 2014, emphasis mine).

In the words of Butler, it is the "slippage between discursive command and its appropriated effect" (1993:82) that constitutes the failure of the performative. According to Aishah, teachers are not supposed to display signs of weakness in their jobs. This involves having to put up a strong front and portraying to the students that they are not easily affected by emotions. However, the affective exchange between Aishah and her student has resulted in an involuntary reaction of display of emotions: the act of crying. Aishah's tears can be seen as a type of slippage which disrupts Aishah's scripted behaviour as a teacher. However, her tears also enabled her to move her student by establishing an emotional connection between the two of them, and thereby providing the opportunity for Aishah to begin to enact care towards that particular student who might be emotionally disconnected from her.

The case of Aishah's tears as a result of emotional slippages relates to Horton and Kraftl's (2009) work on emotions and activism. In their paper which looks at Sure Start, a programme in the UK seeking to improve the well-being and education of children in deprived communities, the authors propose that contrary to the commonplace theorisations of activism, activism can stem from "imperceptible mo(ve)ments of modest political intent, as tiny, ongoing modulations between caring and some kind of supplement" (2009:19). They term this form of activism as "implicit activism". One of the examples they used in their paper to illustrate implicit activism is the ways in which the "banal-material practices of caring" of members in the Sure Start Centre can galvanise activism. Here, I want to use the notion of implicit activism to highlight that ethical outcomes of any events can be a result of *spontaneity*, driven by slippages of emotions (although in Horton and Kraftl's case, care is a *mode* where activism is enacted; while in Aishah's example, care is an *outcome* of another emotional

emergence). Therefore, slippages serve as an important conduit for us to think about how schools are sites of affective/everyday bonds of care, and how slippages have the potential to galvanise into various forms of subversions or activisms (either implicit or intentional).

To look at how slippages can provoke positive change in the education landscape, let me relate one of the events I witnessed during one of the classroom observations during my fieldwork. During a special CCE lesson on racial harmony and cultural understanding, the teacher was going through a powerpoint presentation (a standard set of slides prepared by one of the CCE coordinators for the entire school) on a celebration called Hari Raya Puassa/Aidilfitri, a festival where the Muslim community celebrates after a month of fasting. In one of the slides, the teacher was required to pick a Muslim student in the class to share what s/he did during Hari Raya. A student stood up, but what he did surprised the teacher and his classmates. Instead of following what the teacher said, the student stood up to deliver a touching speech to his classmates, seeking for forgiveness for any wrongdoings, and things that he had done which has offended his classmates. After he had delivered his speech, the entire class remained still for a few seconds, before breaking into applause. The teacher was obviously shocked, and one of the students sitting in the front row commented that the teacher's eyes were red. The student had given the speech because Hari Raya Aidilfitri is a time for forgiveness and for strengthening the bonds between friends and families.

In her book, Ahmed talks about the "messiness" (2014:210) of emotions. She highlights how "feelings are messy such that… they often come at us, surprise us, leaving us cautious and bewildered". The student's speech not only surprised and touched the class, but as a form of emotional slippage, disrupted the usual rhythm of

CCE classes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, issues surrounding emotions and emotional skills are usually glossed over or even absent in a typical CCE class. However, the student's speech generated an affectively charged atmosphere within the class which in turn allowed them to connect with the spirit of Hari Raya that the powerpoint slides could never deliver. Here, the notion of slippages can allow us to have a glimpse into the other possibilities of emotional education that is not delivered by the state, but a more organic form of education which is actualised and experienced by the students themselves. I see this as a form of implicit activism, whereby everyday practices can result in positive changes, albeit in modest ways. It is important to note that Horton and Kraftl also see implicit activism as leaving "little (representational) trace" (2009:21) - although the sharing by the boy in the CCE class left no tangible impact (i.e. changing the syllabus of CCE), the slippage allowed his classmates, teacher, and myself to pause momentarily to think about Hari Raya and the value of cultural understanding.

Quoting Horton and Kraftl in another paper, "openness to, and appreciation of, the ineffable and emotional could, somehow, help us to get closer to the heart of what matters in children's geographies" (2006:260). In this section, I have provided an exploratory account of how slippages that are propelled by emotions can help us to get closer to what matters in education. As slippages are accidental, and emotions are non-representational, they are often easy to sideline when we study the education landscape. However, this section has demonstrated that attention to everyday, emotional events might allow us to glean insights into the taken-for-granted aspects of education. Slippages, although ephemeral and elusive, can be made more apparent when we take emotions and feelings into account. Indeed, throughout my fieldwork,

reflecting and taking note of my own emotions, and paying attention to the emotions of others has helped me navigate the messy, sticky, non-linear affective bonds of the education landscape.

6.5 Conclusion

In her work, Nelson stresses that it is important for geographers "to map how concrete subjects (individual or collective) do identity in relation to various discursive processes… to other subjects, and to layers of institutions and practices" (1999:331). This chapter has considered how emotions serve as a valuable lens and entry point to study the various ways in which students and teachers subvert the state's tactics of governing, by looking at the various ways in which teachers and students subvert the state's tactics of governing. Read in-tandem with the previous chapter, this chapter sheds light on how social relations and identities are spatially embedded, and produced through various neo-liberal, nationalistic discourses. At the same time, such relations and identities can be made and re-made through a series of un/intentional emotional practices. By using the concept of emotional labour, I explored the ways in which teachers negotiate with the state's dominant rhetoric within the curriculum. I highlighted that the notion of emotional labour enables us to study how teachers are active agents who can elicit emotions to help them achieve certain desirable ends in their job. At the same time, emotional labour is also a medium in which teachers are able to enact care and concern towards their students. Thus, emotions become a vehicle in which the dominant rhetoric of the state (portrayed in the curriculum) is challenged. Thinking about emotions enables us to think about the ethics of care surrounding teaching. It also highlights the importance of listening to young people's voices when it comes to learning about the geographies of education. By using the

concepts of performance, I look at how students 'play' with emotions to get around rules. Geographers have long been emphasising the importance of children's voices and positioning them within axes of power in research work (Holloway, 2014). By looking at the ways in which young people perform emotions to get their way around various school rules, I have demonstrated that students are agentic individuals capable of subverting the state's attempts to craft them into individuals which imbue certain idealistic social values. Finally, I explored the notion of slippages and its role in helping us look at emotional sites which will be otherwise overlooked. The notion of slippages also opens up more possibilities of looking at the processes of subject and place-making in the education landscape in creative ways - as much as emotions are intentional, they are also accidental and unpredictable. It is by situating ourselves emotionally within the embodied lives of teachers and young people, that we can have glimpses into the pockets of fleeting opportunities in which hegemonic power can be subverted. However, this is not to assume that all subjects (teachers and students) have equal power to act, and respond to events. The notion of slippages highlights that emotions are relational, and thus always subjected to destabilisation. This reinforces that emotions are contingent, and that we need to contextualise the study of emotions.

7. Conclusion

> "(school) means a lot of things to me, but right now maybe to me in sec three is… very confusing. Its like, it's the year we enjoy, but then next year is serious. So we are indecisive, and we are in a dilemma… whether to study, or whether to play…" (Zakir, Personal Interview, 2014).

7.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have examined the emotional geographies of education in Singapore by asking the question of how emotions are produced, consumed, and circulated in the educational landscape. Focusing on the malleability of emotions, I traced the ways in which emotion functions as a tool for the state to shape the subjectivities of young people; and as a form of tactic that young people and teachers utilise to negotiate and even subvert the established feeling rules. Zakir's quote above captures the spirit of this research. Like Zakir's schooling life which exists in a fluctuant state, the nexus between emotions, education, and young people is an evolving ground which is often confusing and difficult to make sense of. Indeed, as I have established in Chapter 2, researching young people and educational geographies is already an arduous task. Adding emotionality to the equation hence necessarily confounds and complicates the subject at hand. However, despite the challenges of these types of research, emotional geographies of education presents itself as an extremely fertile terrain to explore the organisation of contemporary education, and to provoke new theorisations of emotions. This chapter will provide a brief summary of the main discussions of the thesis, and reflect on some of the potential implications of the research, by drawing out the possible future directions for the sub-discipline of emotional geographies of education.

7.2 Thesis Summary: Tracing Messy Emotions

In their book, Bondi et.al. proposed for a "non-objectifying view of emotions as relational flows, fluxes or currents, in-between people and places" (2005:3). In my thesis, I have adopted a framework which traces the movement of emotions in Singapore's education landscape. In particular, I have emphasised that a geographical lens is pertinent in studying the relationality of emotions in affecting the schooling lives of young people. I proposed a conceptual framework (see Chapter 2) that is sensitive to the messy nature of emotions, as well as the complex organisation of education that is co-constituted by various political, economic, and social processes, and traverses the global scale to the scale of individual bodies. I elicited three concepts: emotional governmentality, performativity of emotions, and emotional tactics to help me explain the workings of some aspects of education in Singapore that are otherwise ineffable and difficult to grasp.

My thesis contributes to the existing scholarly debates in at least two ways. First, it speaks to the research gap in the emerging scholarship of emotional geographies of education, where there is a lack of analysis on studying how emotional learning features in *both* larger scale political-economic processes as well as the microgeographies of the classroom and individual bodies. In my thesis, I have elicited the notion of 'emotionalisation of conduct' to look at the spatialities of emotions in Singapore's educational landscape. In Chapter 5, I explored how Singapore's project of globalising the (future) workforce and instilling citizenry consciousness has resulted in the emotionalisation of the school's Values Education curriculum. I highlighted that Singapore's case serves as an interesting contrast to other case studies previously explored by scholars, as emotional education here is not only the dissemination of

emotional literacy skills, but can take place covertly, through generating an economy of stress and anxiety, so that individuals can be attuned towards embracing the social values taught in school, and to aspire towards being 'holistic individuals'. It is important to note that I discuss emotional education here as a *series* of overt and covert networked mechanisms. They can be manifest as visible signs that are easier to pick up on, such as through the syllabus, school rules, or lesson/activities objectives, or through signs that are more concealed, such as the production and circulation of collective emotions during school programmes and activities. A spatial and scalar perspective is therefore central to unearthing the workings of such emotional governmentality, as the state's benchmark of producing successful global subjects is ultimately based on the curricula delivered in schools, as well as the embodied performance of pupils.

Second, by unveiling how emotional governmentality is enacted, and the ways in which teachers and students respond to such governance, the thesis urges us to think about how emotions might be an *enabling tool* for young people and teachers to advance forms of emotional politics which goes beyond mainstream education's obsession with 'emotional literacy'. As a way of making sense of the complex ebbs and flows of emotions in schooling spaces, I made use of Butler's theory of performativity (1990; 1993). The concept is useful in exploring the embodied (re)enactment of emotions and (re)iteration of social norms, and serves as an entry point for us to investigate if there are ways students and teachers can disrupt these norms. In Chapter 6, I cited three ways in which students and teachers subvert emotional norms. The first example is the emotional labour of teachers, where teachers challenge the unjust dominant narratives in the curriculum as a result of *enacting care for* their

students. The second example I presented involves students tactfully putting up emotional performances and adhering to social scripts that are expected of them to get them out of trouble. The students' emotional performances show that 'feeling rules' can be subverted, and even parodied. I highlighted that the performances also show that young people are not just naïve and unsullied 'consumers' of education. Instead, we should see them as active stakeholders situated within the emotional economy- that is, individuals who are capable of disrupting the dynamics of emotional rules established by other objects of authority.

However, while bringing to light the agency of young people, I am *not* arguing that all Singaporean students are able to exert their agency in school at all times, nor are all forms of subversions (be it enacted by teachers or students) intentional. Thus, the third example I gave in Chapter 6 is that of emotional slippages. There, I adapted Butler's notion of 'slippages' to look at how emotions-as-movements can always travel in multiple and *unexpected* directions. In my chapter, I cited examples of how the actions of teachers and students can get unintentionally 'driven' by their overwhelming emotions, which might in-turn galvanise into acts of subversion. The notion of emotional slippages also points towards how schooling life is often constituted by fleeting emotional moments, and we need to devise methods in order to glean insights into these fleeting moments.

Although my methodology chapter (chapter 4) has already engaged with the ways we can glean insights to the non-representational aspects of education, questions remain as to what are the academic, policy, and/or pedagogical implications of understanding these ineffable aspects of emotions. In the final section, I offer some

critical reflections of the emotional geographies of education to discuss the possible future directions of similar research as a means to conclude this thesis.

7.3 Critical Reflections and Further Research

One insight that can be gleaned from this research is the perspective that educational spaces can consist of a *network of places* outside the school. Although I have largely based my research on mainstream education, and carried out my fieldwork within the physical confines of a school, the research has also implicitly shown that educational spaces constitute a myriad of spaces outside the school. In his book, Kraftl talks about the need for "de-schooling spaces" (2013:238), and sees autonomous educational spaces as valuable sites for investigation because they are based on specific political/philosophical lineage that differ from mainstream education. However, in the case of Singapore, the lines between 'mainstream' and 'autonomous' school systems are more complex. This is due to the authoritarian governing structure of the nation-state, where the government is extremely involved in almost every aspect of education. Additionally, because of the 'holistic education' paradigm, it is not uncommon to see many official school activities being held outside the space of the school. For instance VIA programmes are held at outdoor campsites (such as outward bound schools) and schools frequently organise VIA trips overseas, where some of the schools have established twinning programmes with partner schools. Given that the schooling lives of young people are no longer confined to the borders of the physical classroom, more work can be devoted to studying the overlaps between such collaborative learning spaces.

The changing nature of schooling spaces also points towards the restructuring of emotional education. In my thesis, I have discussed how emotional learning features in

the different aspects of schooling life in Singapore. However, beyond the scope of my research is how emotional education in mainstream schools can also be 'sub-contracted' to private companies, where 'autonomous' trainers and speakers will conduct camps or training sessions to teach the students various social and emotional skills. The process of hiring an external vendor to conduct such sessions includes a tender process, where schools will usually hire the company which places the lowest bid, as a means to save costs. Thiem's (2013) paper argues that educational spaces can affect neoliberal regimes, and in Chapter 3 of my thesis, I have also alluded to how the nature of emotional education in Singapore is very much shaped by the nation-state's neoliberalising goals. The 'marketisation' of emotional education thus reinforces the importance of adopting a scalar perspective in studying the intersections between emotion and education, and serves as an important entry point to explore how education is (re)shaping processes of neoliberalism. Hence, it is pertinent for further research to engage with the specific mechanisms of marketisation of emotions in the educational sphere, because of the potential ethical and pedagogical implications. What happens when economic values are placed upon emotional education? What are the consequences when emotional labour of the teachers is sub-contracted? In what ways might it affect how teachers enact care in the classroom?

Lastly, the conceptualisation of emotional slippages in this thesis offers theoretical possibilities for studying the workings of emotions, as well as young people's politics in education. To date, most of the studies surrounding emotions look at how emotions are intentional and political. However, as Chapter 6 demonstrates, emotions are also extremely prone to slippages. Yet, these unintentional emotions that are produced have the power to affect changes. Indeed, what happens when emotions produced

within certain political discourses spill beyond their intended boundaries? What do all these 'excessive' emotions do? Are there ways that we can direct these emotions to advance young people's politics in education? Relatedly, the notion of emotional slippages not only provides us with the opportunities to look at how hegemonic rules in school can be subverted, but also highlights that schooling life and young people's social lives are often constituted by serendipitous, haphazard, and spontaneous events. These events can be opportunistic spaces for educators and researchers to think about issues surrounding educational politics and young people's agencies.

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